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IVA BILINGUALISM!

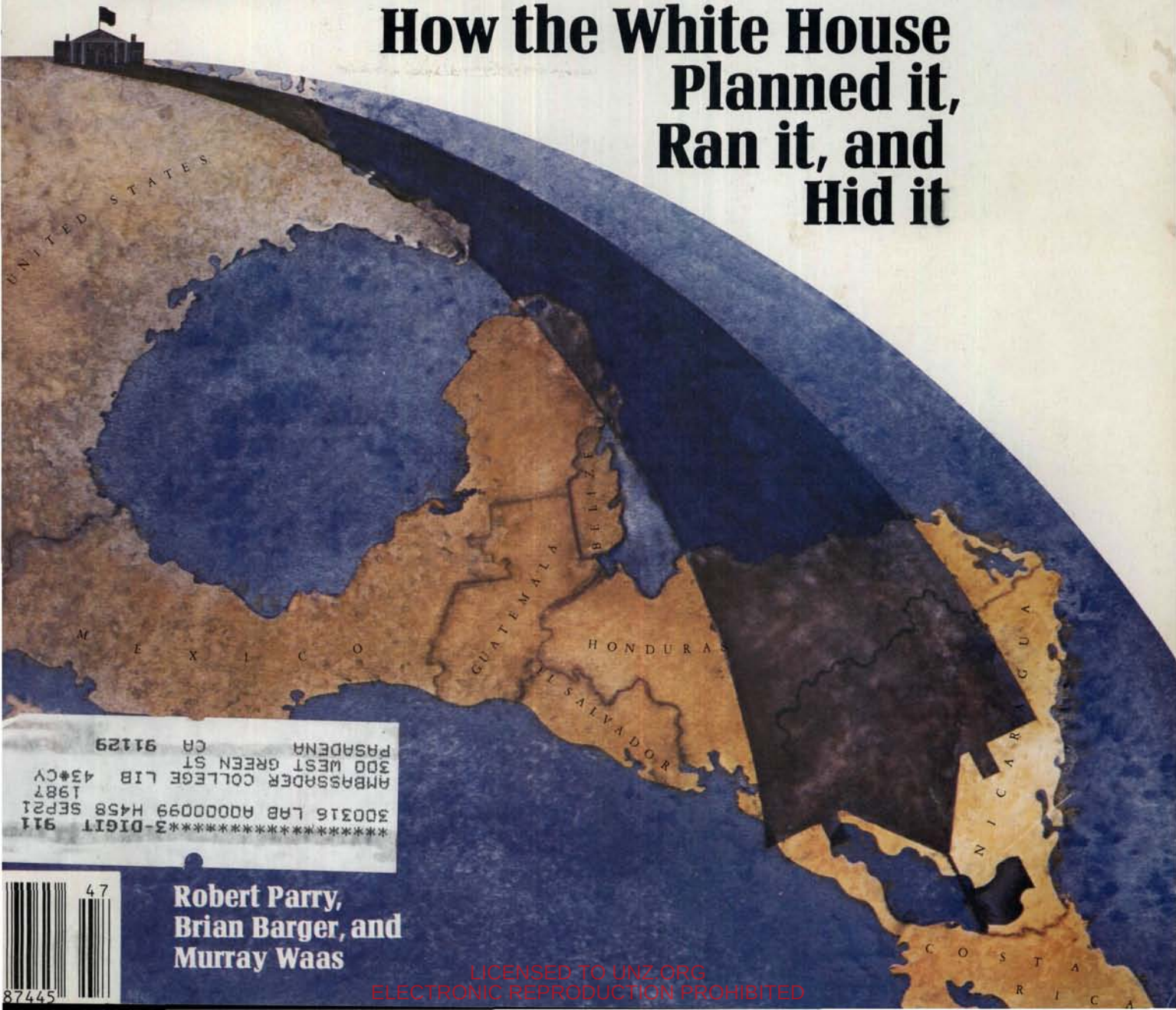
Robert Bazell: AIDS and the Rest of Us

AMERICA, DEBTOR NATION • THE NEW BLACK POLITICS • FALWELL DIVORCES GEORGE BUSH

THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Secret Contra War

How the White House Planned it, Ran it, and Hid it



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A solo PC user becomes a one-man gang when the computer is AT&T's PC 6300 PLUS. Equipped with Simul-Task, the computer can run several programs at once.

While this user prepares a budget forecast, his AT&T PC can simultaneously print out a letter and share data with a remote mainframe, or with the work group at right.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Cut The Crop

Despite all that talk about an issueless campaign, one issue was vital in many states: the farm crisis. Accusations of Republican indifference and promises of vigorous action produced Democratic Senate upsets in North and South Dakota. Elsewhere Republican candidates eked out victories only by taking the Democratic line. Now, unfortunately, the Democrats will be well-positioned and strongly tempted to do what they promised.

What they promised is something called the "Save the Family Farm Act," sponsored by Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa and Representative Richard Gephardt of Indiana. After this election, there will be a great rush to co-sponsor it in the new Congress. It may well become the centerpiece of the Democratic effort to recapture the "populist" imagery that Republicans have stolen so successfully with their tax cuts. Yet in the entire inventory of "new ideas" the Democrats have been storing up for the past six years, this one is probably the worst.

The key provision of the Democratic Farm Act is production quotas—or, as the sponsors call it, "supply management." This is actually not a new idea at all, but a return to one of the many failed strategies of the past half century in the effort to stop the clock in agriculture. In this latest version, farmers would vote every four years whether to join the program. If a majority in any particular commodity (wheat, corn, livestock, dairy, etc.) voted in favor, the secretary of agriculture would "proclaim a national marketing quota" for that product, then "proclaim a national acreage allotment," then divvy up the acreage among the farmers, then give each farmer a "marketing certificate" telling him how much he's allowed to sell. It would be illegal to sell these foodstuffs without a certificate.

The goal, of course, is to raise farm incomes by raising food prices. In theory, this approach of raising the price by limiting supply is somewhat less insane than our current approach of raising prices directly through price supports. The present system forces the government to buy up the huge surplus between what farmers wish to produce at the higher price and what consumers wish to buy. Non-farmers pay for price supports twice: first at the supermarket, then again in taxes. Under production controls, if they work, you only pay once.

But the whole point of the Harkin bill is that current price-raising efforts are deeply inadequate. The present market price for corn, for example, is about $1.75 a bushel. The "loan rate" (support price) is $1.84. The "target price" under another subsidy program applying to only part of the crop is $3.03. The goal of production controls would be to raise the price of *all* corn to $3.95 a bushel, more than double the present price.

The extra two dollars or so farmers would receive for their corn would not come from the U.S. Treasury, but it is the functional equivalent of a tax, nonetheless. What's more, it's a regressive tax, since poorer people spend more of their income on food. Can you imagine the Democrats proposing a national food tax? Well, this is it. No one can say for sure how big this tax would be, but it would certainly dwarf the $25 billion or so the government now spends each year on direct price supports.

No one can say for sure, either, what the overall economic effect of massive production controls would be. But it is a mathematical certainty that the loss to the economy—in forgone farm production and jobs, in reduced spending power for food consumers—would be far larger than the economic gain to farmers.

As the Soviets discover every harvest season, it's a nightmare to enforce and live with central planning in an industry as large and diverse as farming. You need a huge bureaucracy to allocate quotas and prevent cheating. A black market in "excess" food is sure to develop anyway. And with a quota on what each farmer can sell, any incentive for increased productivity and innovation pretty much evaporates.

Meanwhile, each "solution" creates new problems. The Harkin bill stipulates higher welfare payments to counteract the effect of higher food prices on the poor. Grain farmers like higher grain prices but cattle farmers don't, so there are special "transition" rules for feed grains. When grain farmers start using their forcibly idled land for uncontrolled crops, the "oversupply" problem will spread, and so, probably, will the controls.

Obviously production controls can't work unless food imports are excluded. But controls also mean the end of food exports as well, unless the government subsidizes the difference between the artificial internal price and the world market price. Add this to the other seductive economic idea from this year's election—trade protectionism—and the Democratic "vision" that emerges (for all the official Democratic babble about "enhanced international competitiveness") is of an America walled off economically from the rest of the world.

This miserable idea comes packaged in Orwellian rhetoric. "Supply management" for "production quotas" is merely a euphemism. Talk of replacing a "government handout" with a "decent price" is outright deception. As for the idea that this bill is democracy in action because the voting gimmick "gives farmers [the] right to choose their own future": no one is giving food consumers or farm workers or farm suppliers or the other groups that would be hurt by production quotas the right to vote in this election. Should oil companies and car manufacturers and food processors also be allowed to "choose their own future" by voting to create a government-supervised cartel?

In essence, the Harkin-Gephardt bill means that it would be illegal to grow food without a government license. The government would hand out these licenses to current producers, who would then have a monopoly on the right to practice farming. Anyone wishing to enter the business in the future would have to either buy a license, inherit one, or marry into it. In practical terms, the value of the license would be reflected in higher prices for farmland—unless, as in the present idiotic tobacco program, the lucky owners are allowed to sell their "allotment" directly.

So. A system of inherited privilege based on land, financed by a large indirect tax on food, enforced by cadres of wheat police. This is Democratic? This is "populist"? This is a "new idea"?

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CORRESPONDENCE

FIXING ON DRUG HYPE

To the editors:

Adam Paul Weisman's "I Was a Drug-Hype Junkie" (October 6) acknowledges that "drug abuse in America is not a good thing," but claims that the statistics on drug use by schoolchildren are not alarming. They are. Forty-six percent of 1985 high school seniors used illegal drugs in the previous year, 26 percent at least once in the previous month. The number of seniors using cocaine in the past year—13 percent—is at its highest level ever. The decline since 1980 in the use of some illegal drugs by high school seniors pales in comparison to the climb in the rate of school-aged drug use from 1960 to 1980. And a study in the state of New York found that a third of the students surveyed reported using illegal drugs *before* the seventh grade.

The drugs today are far more potent. Since the early 1980s most marijuana has contained four to six percent THC, its major psychoactive ingredient. This is two to three times the amount capable of causing serious psychological damage.

Weisman suggests that much of the current concern about drug abuse is the result of media hype. But the public has consistently identified it as one of the most serious problems facing our schools since the 1970s; since 1977 the Gallup Youth Survey has reported that *teenagers* see it as the greatest problem. Last year 40 percent identified it as the greatest threat; the same result was found in a *Weekly Reader* survey of *fourth through sixth graders*.

The threat posed by illegal drugs has been recognized by both parents and children for years. The media and the politicians are simply catching up. THE NEW REPUBLIC should ask what has taken them so long, rather then chastising them for finally coming to recognize the gravity of the drug problem.

JOHN P. WALTERS
Special Assistant to the Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

It is good to see some journalists come clean and admit that they have been creating a drug scare. But our government is also largely to blame for the distortion, putting out false information about drugs, particularly marijuana, to support the drug war.

On September 25 a *New York Times* front-page story warned that "new" marijuana was more dangerous than "old" because federal officials said potency had increased to 3.5 percent THC. Four months earlier the *Times* had published a similar story in which officials claimed that average potency of marijuana was four percent THC. According to the *Times*'s stories potency had actually decreased. But the headline didn't say marijuana is safer than it was six years ago.

On September 29 UPI published a story claiming that marijuana causes premature aging of the brain. The study being distorted involved three groups of rats. The first received amounts of THC equivalent to 136 joints a day for a 150-pound human being; the second received the equivalent of 54 joints; the third received no THC. The rats were given this for eight months, equal to 35 years for a human being. Only the first group showed any brain problems. The story would have been more accurate if it said that consuming 50 joints a day causes no brain damage.

Probably the most dangerous distortions attempt to link marijuana to AIDS. Dr. Ian McDonald, director of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration, has claimed that early marijuana use causes AIDS because 25 percent of AIDS patients use i.v. drugs and all began with marijuana. Carlton Turner, President Reagan's top drug adviser, has claimed marijuana causes AIDS because 90 percent of AIDS patients have used marijuana. Recent research conducted for the federal government showed that marijuana use actually enhances the immune system. It would be more accurate to say that marijuana may prevent AIDS.

Our government is in the midst of a drug war. I hope the media and the general public will remember that the first victim of war is truth.

KEVIN ZEESE
National Director, National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Adam Paul Weisman's admirable attempt to set out the facts was flawed by an all-too-common math error: an increase in cocaine use among high school seniors from 16 percent to 17 percent is not a one percent increase, but a 6.25 percent increase. Statistics are only as reliable as their interpreters.

DENNIS MORGAN
Orange, California

HOPE IT'S A HANGOVER

To the editors:

One can only hope that the Reagan legacy does resemble the morning after a New Year's Eve binge more closely than the depths of problem drinking ("The Reagan Hangover," October 13). The trade deficit, coupled with failure to revitalize education, research, and training, is not likely to bring on the kind of headache one can vanquish with a few Alka Seltzers. Our national habit of applying superficial makeovers is so ingrained and fueled by praise for its easy grace that we find it difficult to peer behind the mask. It seems high time to take a hard look inward, admit illness, and resolve to set a course back to health, knowing that the road to recovery is neither certain nor short. The low gas prices Reagan preserves by opposing the ten-cent-a-gallon tax won't do us or our neighbors much good, after all, if we persist in driving drunk.

WILLIAM E. COOPER
Iowa City, Iowa

GREAT TASTE, LESS TALENT

To the editors:

I would not want to challenge Robert Brustein's recent claim that moonlighting in the commercial theater may affect adversely a director's aesthetic principles ("Moonlighting Serenades," October 20). I worry, however, that he attributes the problem so exclusively to the inferiority of the material. Can any theatrical assignment really be "inherently tasteless"? *Cats* is kitsch less because Andrew Lloyd Webber is not T. S. Eliot than because Nunn is not Fosse or Bennett, let alone Guthrie or Welles. Surely someone might claim that as dramatic literature *Nicholas Nickleby* is closer to *Hellzapoppin'* than to *Hamlet*. Nor, as is evidenced by Hall's recent *Macbetto*, does superior material necessarily guarantee a richer directorial concept. Admittedly, inferior material has its limitations. But one wonders if the problem is not less one of taste than one of talent.

DAVID VAN LEER
Davis, California

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 24, 1986

OWE, NO!

You and I as individuals can, by borrowing, live beyond our means, but only for a limited period of time. Why should we think that collectively, as a nation, we are not bound by that same limitation?

—Ronald Reagan, first inaugural address, January 20, 1981

For most of this century, American capital drove the world economy, making both postwar recovery in Europe and growth in the developing world possible. Just five years ago, we were still a creditor nation. In fact, our net international investment position—the difference between what foreigners owe us and what we owe them—hit an all-time high in 1981: $140 billion. But now our status as banker to the world is a thing of the past. By the end of 1986, this country will be $250 billion in hock to foreigners. And the foreign debt could approach $1 trillion within the next few years. *Bienvenido*, America, to the ramshackle club of debtor nations. We're already the most indebted member.

Foreign debt is the inevitable consequence of our huge trade deficit, which is expected to be between $155 billion and $170 billion this year. Until February 1985 the Federal Reserve and the Reagan administration steadily pumped up the value of the dollar, making imports cheap. This bought a consumer boom for America—and a second term for Ronald Reagan. But it has priced American exports out of every market from Singapore to Stuttgart.

The supply-side tax cuts were advertised as a cure for America's chronic low-savings habit. But with Americans rushing to snap up cheap imports, domestic savings have dwindled. There is now a gap equal to nearly three percent of GNP between the domestic supply of savings and the total demand for credit by consumers, businesses, and government—thanks largely to the federal government's $220 billion budget deficit. Foreign savings have poured in to fill that financial Grand Canyon. Our spending spree has been made possible by the thrift of Germans and Swiss, Japanese and Dutch.

But as long as foreigners are willing to finance our economy, why shouldn't we let them? After all, the United States is an industrial giant, not some satrapy. Even at the trillion-dollar level, our foreign debt represents a much smaller percentage of our GNP than Latin countries' debts do. Indeed, the influx of foreign investment is largely a tribute to the advantages of investing in our stable free-market society rather than in the tumultuous nations of the Third World.

We almost prefer such a carefree view to the outpouring of protectionism and xenophobia that is bound to come about once our new status as a debtor nation penetrates the American consciousness. Let's be clear about the real reasons to worry about the foreign debt. Buying from abroad is not inherently damaging to our economy. If foreign workers can make a product more cheaply than we can, it is to our benefit to stop making it here, and to buy it from them. Some people, justifiably worried about our trade position, seem to think it would be good for us if the Japanese and the Germans weren't as productive as they are. But in fact we'd be a lot worse off if the Japanese and the Germans suddenly lost their genius for producing low-cost, high-quality goods, or if we set up protectionist barri-

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ers to keep thei goods out.

Nor is there a reason to worry about foreign investors' "buying up" o country. There is nothing wrong, in principle, with bo wing from abroad. If a business takes out a loan from a b k and spends it on computers that make the business re efficient, then it can pay back the loan with prof to spare. The same goes for the economy as a whole. If we borrow from abroad to boost productivity and, hence, the competitiveness of our economy, we can eventually sell more exports. That way we pay back foreign investors and still have money left over to spend here.

But the truth is that we have *not* been borrowing to invest. We have spent much of our foreign borrowings on

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

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1. ELECTIC LOWDOWN

Elections. Accor g to last-minute pre-election analyses, this year's nasty but othe se directionless campaigns became a national turnoff. Electi like other extended mass events, play out along dramatic lines c conflict. The lack of them this year has gotten this election the wo st reviews in memory.

2. UNTIE A ELLOW RIBBON

Hostages. Jacobs 's release has pundits scrambling for a cause (see also No. 8 below), but much coverage leads with family joy. A conservative British journalist wrote enviously of Americans during the Daniloff aff r that U.S. society is marked by "genuine fraternity. No America is an island. If one bleeds, they all bleed." In fact, the highly pers nalized coverage, though decried in circumstances of tragedy, refl ts such values of commonality.

3. PLAGUE EAR

AIDS. Another ave of AIDS warnings has increased AIDS attention, though th stories—potentially contaminated blood banks, the endangered traight population, etc.—are largely the same as they've been t a year. AIDS-in-the-workplace concerns have, however, reach such opinion-forming trades as journalism, with even *Editor an blisher* addressing the matter of working next to AIDS sufferers the disease spreads, journalists' worries about their personal ty could have an impact on its media treatment.

4. IT'S A W NDERFUL STRIFE

Movies. Here's looking at you, kid, *in color.* There's a furor over computerized colori ation of old b&w movies. Colorizers' claims that nobody much w tches b&w on TV—especially under-20s—are apparently true; s me classics (e.g., Laurel & Hardy) are doing well as color cassettes. ut the colorizers' claim that nobody has rights to the films but th m, though legally true, is cultural idiocy. *Casablanca*, for one, h s tained National Treasure status. Besides, the culture's good gu Jimmy Stewart, et al.) are fighting the process actively.

5. CLASS UGGLE

Middle class. mber the American middle class? Reports now worry that it tting into top- and low-ends. Many Americans feel they'll ne as well as their parents, can never buy a house, etc. The end s supposed to be a Britainized U.S. society, with a moneyed up lass and an immobile lower class no longer sharing the same l standards. This is already true in consumer culture, wh have segregated shopping by class.

6. PALL FAMILY

Marriage ar y. Families are hot on TV, but reports of the family's re eatly exaggerated. Divorce and illegitimacy have become the norm; 25 percent of U.S. households now consist of one person; "traditional" families account for only 28 percent. Meanwhile, not-necessarily-feminist analyses of women qua women are emerging. A *New York Times Magazine* piece argues confusion among women concerning their marriage-career ideals, while Maggie Scarf's book about how marriages are formed (or deformed) via generational learning is getting a ballyhoo response through its *Atlantic* excerpts.

7. REVOLUTIONS PER MINUTE

Home leisure. The 7-inch, 45-rpm single, symbol of postwar teenage life, is being publicly buried. The growth of CDs had its effect, but the single record is being done in by a network of social changes: fewer teen buyers in the aging population, competition for store-space from CD's and tapes, fewer jukeboxes due to the rise of fast-food places, and the abandonment of the home turntable, which is being called "a museum piece."

8. SHOOTING STAR WARS

Summit aftermath. Discussion of the Iceland summit has devolved into utter confusion. The last time it played, Reagan was representing the near-agreement, or whatever it was, in different terms daily. That doesn't leave much basis for discussing anything except guesswork—and the revived notion that leadership is too important to be left to leaders.

9. BUYING LYING

Advertising. The ad campaign of the year, in terms of impact, has been Isuzu's "The Liar" series, which not only plays directly to the assumption that car ads are all baloney, but which demands close viewer attention. Isuzu's had the "clever" car ad ghetto pretty much to itself since the VW Beetle ads petered out, but The Liar's success has prompted other car makers to soften up and benefit from the goodwill the approach engenders.

10. ORIGIN OF THE SPECIOUS

Pseudoscience. A survey of Texas college students' beliefs indicates how dead Age of Aquarius fantasies now are; nobody buys "Space Gods" or even astrology anymore. But biblically derived beliefs are very strong, with only small minorities disbelieving Noah's Flood, Adam and Eve, etc. Most striking is the conviction that both creationism and evolution should be taught in school, confirming the strength of creationists' "fairness" argument and of fundamentalist principles in the face of secular education.

BONUS: WHO'S THE BOSS?

Meese. The angry, confused response to Meese's Supreme Court remarks were still resonating when he suggested employers ought to, in effect, spy on their employees, even at the corner tavern. If nothing else, Meese's positions on personal behavior (chastity, porno, etc.) and authority indicate how much the conservative domestic agenda has been redefined in the last 30 years. In the old days, you weren't supposed to be able to legislate morality.

*Item resu e Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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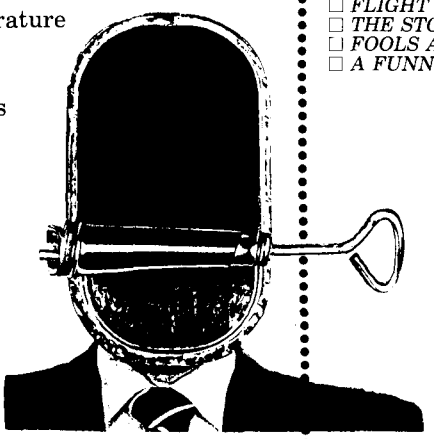

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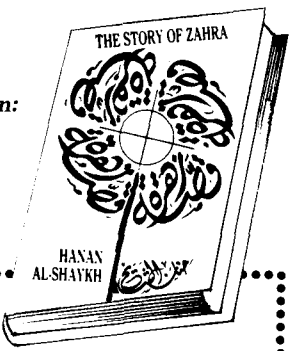

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covering our budget deficit—that is, on a military buildup, farm subsidies, and Social Security. Whatever the merits of these programs, none of them represents investment in enhancing productivity and economic competitiveness. There is no market in Tokyo for Bradley fighting vehicles. Social Security transfers income from productive workers and businesses to retired consumers. Farm subsidies transfer resources from sectors of the economy that are paying their own way to a sector that isn't.

And though our dependence on foreign capital relative to the total size of our economy is not as great as that of the Latin debtors, we are still dependent. We can only maintain our present standard of living as long as foreigners keep pumping capital into our country. As soon as the rate of return foreigners earn on their money here no longer exceeds what they can get at home or elsewhere, they will cut us off. And note that the moment of crisis comes not when foreign investors actually start pulling their money out, but as soon as they stop pouring additional money in.

HOW SOON could that happen? For the last 20 months, the Reagan administration has been pushing down the dollar's value relative to the Japanese yen and the German mark. In August and September, that began to pay off in slight decreases in the trade deficit. Ironically, however, a cheaper dollar threatens foreigners' willingness to keep investing here. No one wants to get paid back in a currency whose value is constantly declining. If foreigners decided to stop sending us new capital we would have to jack up interest rates to stem the outward flow. That would flatten our economy, and the world economy as well.

The likelihood of such a disaster was diminished somewhat by the deal between the United States and Japan announced last weekend, in which the Japanese agreed to another cut in their interest rate. That means that, for a while longer at least, Japanese investors will still be able to get a higher rate of return here than in Japan itself—without America's having to increase interest rates.

But the possibility of a short-term crash isn't the real reason to worry about our indebtedness. Working off the debt over the long run will be bad enough. At present foreign financing allows us to consume more than we produce. Soon we will have to start producing more than we consume—that is, run a trade surplus. And those surpluses will have to be just as big as the deficits we've been piling up until now. There is no way to avoid this painful process. It would be less painful if we achieved the turnaround through higher productivity in industries where we enjoy a comparative advantage vis-à-vis other nations. But that seems unlikely, given how we have frittered away borrowed foreign funds so far, and given how much damage the strong dollar has already done to export industries.

That leaves two much less attractive methods. We may have to devalue the dollar further, and keep it cheap for a long time to cut the price of our exports and make imports more costly. Or, since Japan can't keep cutting its interest rate forever, we may have to raise interest rates to keep foreign borrowing in our economy; the resulting recession would hold down consumption of imports too. Devaluation and recession are precisely the methods Latin debtors have been forced to employ to meet their debt obligations. We, too, would find ourselves systematically reducing our own standard of living in order to enrich the societies to which we owe money. The Democratic staff of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress estimates that, by the end of this decade, servicing our foreign debt could cost every American family at least $2,500.

We do have one advantage over the Latins, however: our debt is denominated in our own currency, the dollar. That gives us the option of simply printing more money and paying back our debts in inflated money. Of course, that might well kill off whatever foreign investment remained in the U.S economy, not to mention the damage it would do to our living standards. Alas, we would probably try some unsavory mix of all three policies: a cheap dollar, slow growth, and higher inflation. Don't cry for us, Argentina.

THE INEXORABLE LOGIC of compound interest means that we are going to be a debtor nation for years to come. How best to exercise what little control we still have over the situation? Even if the Japanese do seem to be playing along for the moment, the Reagan administration's strategy—nudge our trading partners to grow faster and buy more of our exports—is basically a nickel-and-dime approach. Our export industries are so weak that the benefits of more growth abroad would be relatively small in any case, and the West Germans are still refusing to pump up their economy for fear of inflation. And who are we to give them economic advice? Even if we think the Germans and the Japanese ought to reflate, it's basically their business, not ours. Our foreign debt is our problem to solve.

That will take a far more sober view of the federal budget deficit than either the administration or Congress has managed so far. The lower the deficit, the lower our foreign debt. And there are only two ways to cut the deficit—raising taxes or reducing middle-class entitlements and defense spending. Yet such basic common sense has been ruled politically out of bounds, thanks to Ronald Reagan's demagogy on taxes and to both parties' demagogy on Social Security and farm supports.

The shabby reality of our indebtedness makes it clear there's no time left for fiscal dithering. Yes, trimming Social Security and phasing out farm programs would mean sacrifice for many people. But many more people will endure worse suffering if we don't take steps now to reduce our future debt burden. Yes, higher taxes will reduce real incomes, and may lead to slower growth in the economy as well. But a cheap dollar is a tax on imported goods. High interest rates are a tax on investment and growth. And inflation is a tax on just about everything. Next to these, an income tax surcharge or a 50-cent-per-gallon gas tax pale to insignificance. Ignoring such facts, America's political leaders escort the country down the same dreary path that Mexico, Argentina, Chile, and the rest have already traveled. □

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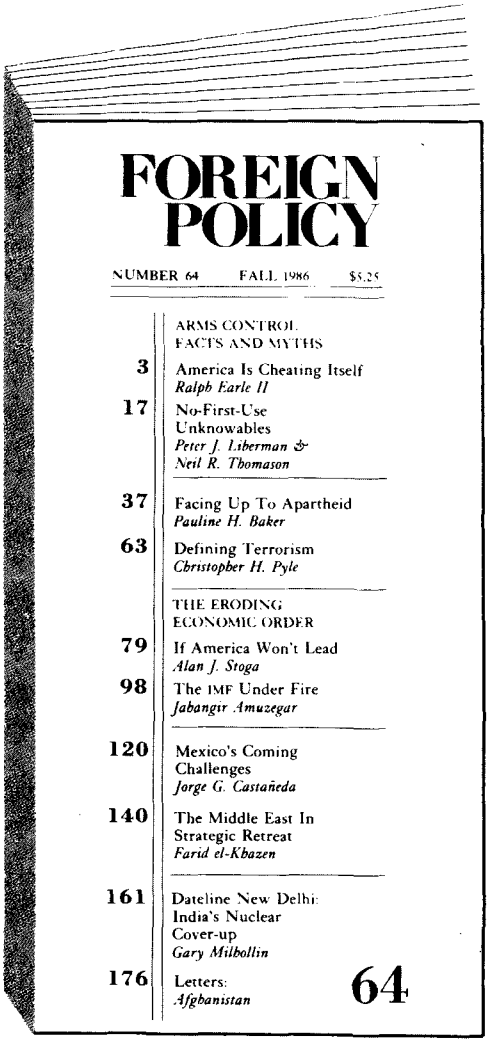

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MIDDLE EAST MACHIAVELLI

Does Hafez al-Assad keep an Arabic copy of Machiavelli by his bedside?

For a long time we have known that the president of Syria is in the murder business. There is powerful evidence that Assad was behind the murder of Lebanese president-elect Bashir Gemayel, of Lebanese Druse leader Kamal Jumblat (with whose son Assad is now in a cozy alliance), of at least three Jordanian diplomats (in Ankara, Bucharest, and Madrid), and of assorted overly independent Palestinians. Now we have proof up to Old Bailey standards. A British jury found Nezar Hindawi guilty of trying to plant a bomb on his pregnant girlfriend as she was about to board an El Al plane with 375 passengers. Assad's government planned, organized, and paid for this grotesque crime. Within three hours of the verdict, Britain broke diplomatic relations with Syria.

Margaret Thatcher's gutsy move embarrassed Britain's Western European allies, who responded with shameless appeasement. It also helped free an American hostage, David Jacobsen, held in Lebanon for over 17 months. This, in turn, showed to everyone but the most willfully obtuse that Assad is in the kidnapping business, too. For months he has been pretending that, no, he doesn't control the Western hostages being held in Lebanon, but that, yes, if people do what he wants, he'll see what he can do to get them released. Western governments have found it indelicate to point out the contradiction between these two propositions.

There is a certain elegance to Assad's ruthlessness. Within days of Britain's action, with pressure mounting on the United States to follow suit, with a meeting of EEC foreign ministers coming up to reconsider actions against Syria—all of a sudden, hostage negotiator Terry Waite pops up in Beirut and announces that things are moving. Within hours, Jacobsen is released. The kidnappers issue a statement indicating that this one American is a down payment, with more to come if the United States acts correctly.

The American TV networks, broadcasting from Mars, at first did not make the connection between the British action (and the subsequent pressure for American action against Syria) and Jacobsen's release. They were either at a loss for explanations or fixated on the Iranian role. But the key event before the release was the visit of Iran's foreign minister to Syria. It was after his meeting with Assad that Jacobsen was released. Hostages are not kept in Syria's part of Lebanon except at the sufferance of Assad.

Now that Assad stands exposed, France's conduct toward him becomes all the more disgraceful. *Le Monde* reports that the French secret service is acting in cooperation with Syria's to stop terrorism in France. France played a leading role in blocking any EEC action in support of Britain's break with Syria. Greece played the other leading role. The difference between the two is that Chirac whored for payment—protection from further bombings in Paris. Papandreou did it for love. France also reportedly has assured Syria that the February trial of Georges Ibrahim Abdallah, who is accused of murdering an American and an Israeli official in France, and whose family bombed Paris during the last month to gain his release, will turn out well for Abdallah, and for Syria. *Sauve qui peut.*

A virtuoso performance by Assad. Britain is isolated. France is appeased. And the United States is stymied. With one hostage released, and the others held in limbo, it is very difficult for an American president to do now what common decency and loyalty—Britain stood alone with the United States on the Libyan air raid—demands: breaking relations with Syria.

What to do? We are forced to continue the current negotiations to get the remaining American hostages released. But we must attach a deadline, say, of a week or ten days, so that our foreign policy does not indefinitely become hostage to kidnappers. What to offer? Promise Assad no further diplomatic steps against him if the hostages are released. If they are not released, then we support the British and break relations with a judicially demonstrated international outlaw.

And what if they are released? Announce immediately that all Americans must quit Beirut and that those who insist on staying are henceforth on their own, no longer the responsibility of the government of the United States. Wait for the evacuation. Then break relations with Syria the next day. Assad will appreciate the touch.

NOTEBOOK

□ DAN, WHAT'S THE FREQUENCY? All afternoon on Election Day our office here was abuzz with political gossip: the TV network exit polls were showing a big sweep for the Democrats in the Senate races. But when we went home to get the details on the evening news, we were mystified to be told that all remained uncertain. Then we remembered—oh, yes—that in response to various high-minded objections, the networks now scrupulously refuse to report exit poll results until the actual polls are closed. As a result, election-night reporting on the networks now resembles baseball broadcasts in the early days of radio, when commentators knew the final score but doled out the results inning by inning, complete with phony sound effects. It's pretty comic to think of Dan Rather stirring up artificial suspense when he knows—or at least some of those people milling around behind him must know—far more than he's telling. But there's also a troubling question of journalistic propriety about purposely sitting on crucial news. And all for what? We never have understood the argument that it is somehow unfair to tell people the probable, or even certain, result of an election before they vote. Keeping it a secret doesn't change that probability or certainty. How is it "unfair" to someone to tell her something she wouldn't otherwise know—something she's free to act upon or ignore at her pleasure? Nor do we understand the argument that advance word of exit polls can change the results by encouraging the loser's supporters to stay home. Why should word that the result is a foregone conclusion

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affect one side more than the other? Finally, why pick on exit polls? This year, like any other, the overwhelming majority of political races are pretty much foregone conclusions even before Election Day. By the logic of the "keep-'em-in-suspense" school of democratic thinking, all poll results should be censored.

□ YIKES! WHO POURED WINE INTO THE BISCUIT WARMER?

> **Because of a mechanical error, captions last week on page 45 of Home Entertaining, part 2 of The Times Magazine, describing table settings were reversed. It was the upper picture that included an etched decanter with silver stopper; the Victorian sterling-silver biscuit warmer was in the lower grouping.**

—*New York Times*, November 2

□ AFRAIDS, CONTINUED: We endorse the surgeon general's call for a massive public education campaign to slow the spread of AIDS. (See "Surviving AIDS" by Robert Bazell, page 20.) But if public alarm about AIDS is going to be turned up a notch or two, steps must also be taken to prevent this concern from turning ugly. In particular, it's crucial that education about what causes AIDS be accompanied by education about what *doesn't* cause AIDS. In a recent survey of high school students in San Francisco, a third believed you can get AIDS by using someone else's comb. Children with AIDS are still being kept out of school in places, and AIDS carriers are still being shunned in offices and factories, even though all evidence suggests that the virus *cannot* be spread through everyday contact. Similarly, if AIDS testing becomes more widespread, as it probably should, there must be stronger guarantees that the information from these tests is not abused.

□ SHEIKH OVERBOARD: OPEC may or may not succeed in re-establishing an oil price of $18 a barrel. The firing of Ahmed Zaki Yamani, Saudi Arabia's oil minister for 24 years and a "moderate" as these things go, signals a renewed determination to make the attempt. What's astonishing is how the West is observing these developments as if they were maneuverings on a distant battlefield with no effect on us. Or maybe worse. Although conventional wisdom attributes the latest developments to the growing influence of militant Iran within OPEC, Youssef Ibrahim of the *Wall Street Journal* reports: "Industry officials say the U.S. government has recently expressed an interest to Saudi Arabia in a return to higher oil prices to relieve pressure from the U.S. petroleum lobby for oil-import fees." Can the Reagan administration actually be so stupid, and so pig-headed in its opposition to new taxes, that it would rather see OPEC get an extra five dollars a barrel than to collect that five dollars itself? Higher oil prices are *not* in the interest of the United States or the West in general, and the OPEC nations should be made to understand—as they clearly do not now—that any effort to raise prices through production controls will be regarded as a hostile act. Meanwhile, we should help to assure the failure of OPEC's attempt to control supply with policies that reduce demand (a gasoline and heating oil levy, not an import fee that gives a windfall to domestic producers).

□ ON SECOND THOUGHT: We were strongly tempted to take back our kind words for recent editorial changes at the *New York Times* when we read that paper's astonishing endorsement of Alfonse D'Amato's re-election as senator from New York. D'Amato's sworn testimony claiming ignorance of illegal kickbacks is described as "incredible." Reference is made to his connections with organized crime, to his appalling votes, to his ludicrous publicity capers. On the other hand, it is noted that he strongly supports Israel and Soviet dissidents, as if any New York politician does not. The only serious point made in D'Amato's favor is that he brings home millions of dollars in pork barrel for New York. The usually statesmanlike *Times* says these "practical achievements" justify D'Amato's re-election over Democrat Mark Green, who suffers from a "failure to demonstrate broad support." (In contrast, "D'Amato Image Earns Wide Support" was the headline over a *news* story in the *Times* the day before the election.) Are pork and popularity now the standards by which the *New York Times* judges elected officials? With Sulzbergers like these, who needs Murdochs?

□ DIZZY SPELLS: Last week's TRB column grotesquely misquoted Attorney General Meese as saying that a Supreme Court decision "lacks the character of law." That particular sentence was saying precisely the opposite (though Meese went on to say that such a decision "does not establish a 'supreme Law of the Land' "). In the same issue, a misplaced "that" changed the meaning of a sentence in Leon Wieseltier's article: "Thus it is an illusion that, as Thomas Schelling recently remarked, 'smaller numbers are better than bigger ones.' " What Schelling remarked is that this is an illusion.

□ ELEVEN DAYS IN OCTOBER:

Global Threat

Big U.S. Trade Deficit
Supplants Debt Crisis
As Top Economic Peril

—*Wall Street Journal*, October 20

Regaining Balance

U.S. Trade Problems
Begin to Ease, Spurred
By the Dollar's Decline

—*Wall Street Journal*, October 31

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Breaking the rules.

THE NEW BLACK POLITICS

IN BLACK POLITICS this year, winning isn't everything. If you really want to know what's happening, look at who's losing. Consider the unhappy experiences of three prominent black candidates: Julian Bond of Atlanta, Kenneth Gibson of Newark, New Jersey, and Clarence Mitchell III of Baltimore. Each was a front-runner, each campaigned as a symbol of the local black establishment, and each got beaten by another black candidate.

As the civil rights movement fades further into the past and non-racial issues grow in importance, a new generation of politicians is emerging to replace—and, in some instances, elbow aside—the pioneering generation of black officeholders. It is a changing of the guard, hastened by an expanding pool of experienced and ambitious black candidates. Unlike the changes wrought by the 1965 Voting Rights Act, these developments represent political evolution, not revolution. The new black politics is really nothing more than the normalization of black politics. Black politics is becoming more like white politics—for better and for worse.

Today's black candidates, just like their white counterparts, badly want to win and aren't terribly squeamish about embracing negative campaign tactics, if that's what it takes. In east Baltimore, for example, a black congressional candidate recently mounted the steps of a school for pregnant girls to denounce his black opponent for fathering five illegitimate sons and therefore contributing "to the crisis in black America: the breakup of the black family."

The progenitor in question, Kweisi Mfume (who has confirmed the accuracy of the charge) will now have a chance to be part of the solution—as Congressman Kweisi Mfume. Mfume won the Democratic primary (which was tantamount to election last week), overcoming seven opponents, including the favorite, state Senator Clarence Mitchell III, scion of the state's most prominent civil rights family.

Mitchell's defeat bears one of the hallmarks of the new black politics: black candidates who appeal mainly to blacks are losing to black candidates who rely on biracial or non-racial themes. Mitchell tried unsuccessfully to exploit racial feelings, painting himself as a champion of black interests against the "white establishment." Mfume, a 37-year-old Baltimore city councilman, ran a slick, patriotic media campaign that has been likened to Ronald Reagan's 1984 "morning in America" campaign. Mfume led in both the black and the white vote. Mitchell finished a weak third.

By comparison to the Maryland race, the campaign in Georgia's 5th Congressional District seemed almost tame. But it wasn't, not by the genteel standards of Atlanta's black community. Eyebrows were raised when John Lewis challenged his longtime friend Julian Bond to take a drug test. When Bond declined to be urinanalyzed, Lewis sent sound trucks into black neighborhoods to trumpet his refusal. Lewis attacked Bond for caring more about national celebrity than neighborhood problems, portraying him as arrogant and aloof, and even chiding him for having an unlisted phone number. "Don't send a showboat to Congress," Lewis urged. "Send a tugboat."

Glib, sophisticated, and capable of showmanship—that was Bond in a nutshell. Precisely the sort of spokesman for black America that Atlanta would be proud to send to Washington. Such was the almost unanimous judgment of the city's black establishment, which crowded into Bond's corner after he led a multicandidate field (all black) in the first primary.

Bond's defeat in the primary runoff was widely blamed on white voters, who went for Lewis by a 4-to-1 margin. It is true that Lewis carried the white vote (which accounted for about 40 percent of the total vote), and lost the black vote. (His biracial coalition, incidentally, was the reverse of the coalitions on which white liberals have long depended in multiracial districts in the South.) But the "whites did it" analysis is flawed. Atlanta whites have regarded Bond with deep suspicion ever since his anti-Vietnam War days. He had expected to do badly in white areas. (One of his most prominent black supporters privately criticizes him for virtually writing off the white vote). What Bond did not count on was the sharp falloff in his margin among black voters. Though both men came to prominence as leaders of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in the early '60s, Bond had never run outside his state legislative district. Lewis had run and won two city-wide council races. In addition, according to Bond's own supporters, the drug issue hurt him among older blacks, who began to question his refusal to take the test.

Then there was what Mayor Andrew Young (a tacit Bond supporter) referred to, rather ungraciously, as Lewis's "sympathy vote." According to this line of analysis, black voters, out of pity, swung to Lewis, whose plodding speaking style looked all the worse when contrasted with Bond's smoothness. (The press was relentless on this point; *Time*, which years ago canonized Lewis as a "living saint," coldly characterized him this time as "thick-tongued.")

THE MAYOR'S THEORY may comfort him, since it tends to downplay the establishment's setback. But others interpreted Bond's defeat as a manifestation of growing voter resentment over the failure of the city's black elected leadership to improve the lot of ordinary blacks after 13 years in power. This revolt of rising expectations, unrealizable though those hopes might have been, found a target in Bond, whose experience was in state government but whose supporters were solidly entrenched at City Hall. Bill Campbell, a rising, young black city councilman, says: "Candidates who have shown the community that they are going to pay attention to the nitty-gritty local issues—getting the garbage picked up, seeing that the police are there—will be the ones who succeed in the 1980s and 1990s." A North Carolinian who migrated to Atlanta after law school, Campbell sees himself as a typical

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"buppie" (black urban professional): middle-class, transient, and unlikely to vote automatically for older blacks whose authority stems from the civil rights past.

In Newark disillusionment with Mayor Kenneth Gibson's performance led to his defeat by city councilman Sharpe James in this year's city elections. Gibson's pitch to black voters—that being the city's first black mayor held special significance for blacks—fell on deaf ears. "Black voters are reacting at the polls as any other voters would react," says Richard W. Roper, a former Gibson aide who directs the Council on New Jersey Affairs at Princeton University. "If a black voter is faced with a black elected official who has not produced, the black voter is not going to support that official just because he is black. That is a change. Black elected officials are now being held to the same standards that any official is. Before, race mattered more than performance. There was a circling of the wagons, if you will, to protect the black politician who had been the first to achieve an elective office."

No longer is it taboo for quality black candidates to oppose one another. "For the first time, black voters are getting an opportunity that other voters have had in this country for a long time. They can choose between two good candidates who both happen to be black," says Chaka Fattah, a 29-year-old state representative from Philadelphia. Before, the fear was the black-versus-black contests would expose to white eyes the well-hidden divisions within the black community or, worse, produce a splintered black vote that elected a white candidate.

THE CURRENT transition in black politics is uneven, and it could take decades to complete. In Philadelphia, for example, where a black mayor ordered the firebombing of a black neighborhood, no black challenger is likely to emerge in next year's city election. And in Washington, a black mayor surrounded by corruption cruised to reelection. No one expects that anytime soon candidates everywhere will be free to challenge other blacks or that black voters will succeed in throwing all the bums out. One reason for the increased competition among black candidates is that those who succeed on the local level are forced to scrap for the very limited number of higher offices that blacks have a realistic chance of winning.

Recently there have been crucial breakthrough tries by black candidates for higher office, such as this year's gubernatorial candidates Tom Bradley of California and Bill Lucas of Michigan, and successes, such as L. Douglas Wilder's election last year as lieutenant governor of Virginia. These represent major steps toward what is obviously the goal in black political development: when black candidates can freely aspire to win election in districts where whites predominate. "That's the point," says Princeton's Roper, "at which black politics, in effect, will disappear."

PAUL WEST

Paul West is national political correspondent of the Baltimore Sun.

Falwell's vanishing endorsement.

JERRY DUMPS GEORGE

AFTER A LITTLE more than a year and a half, one of the strangest marriages in American politics is foundering. Jerry Falwell is backing out of his endorsement of George Bush's presidential bid.

Falwell met with Pat Robertson at Robertson's headquarters in Virginia Beach in early September, and the two men made a deal. "Jerry promised us he wouldn't campaign for Bush," says a top Robertson aide. The official announcement came on September 17, when Falwell made it known that he was retreating from politics. Calling the kind of active campaigning he has done in the past "too polarizing to unbelievers," Falwell told his former public relations adviser Cal Thomas that "I will no longer allow in my pulpit anything but a minuscule amount of politics. We are going back to where we were before Moral Majority when he had a clear purpose, but did not have a major emphasis on politics."

Of course, Falwell has no intention of leaving politics. In fact, this election year he was more active than ever. The Liberty Federation, founded last January by Falwell with the express purpose of broadening his organization's political involvement, is going full steam this fall. "We're taking on new horizons," Falwell said at the time, "enlarging our camp." Falwell still has his own PAC, and he still gives money to candidates. A month after the supposed pullout, Falwell's newspaper, the *Liberty Report*, had a special issue on the elections, urging evangelicals to get out and vote in November, and closely scrutinizing key House and Senate races. (The *Report* also profiled prospective GOP presidential candidates without showing any preference for Bush.)

All Falwell wants to do is sever his ties to Bush. Ever since he suddenly and unexpectedly backed the vice president after a private meeting with him last year, the endorsement has caused Falwell nothing but trouble. "He went in there and got his ego stroked," says one former White House official of Falwell's private meeting with Bush. "His whole organization was totally shocked." Falwell tried, in the beginning, to convince his people that Bush was a worthy ally of the New Right, but to no avail. When the Moral Majority polled its major contributors recently on the Bush issue, 55 percent of them still had strong objections.

Today sources close to the Falwell campaign point to the Bush factor as one good reason Falwell's contributions are down as much as $20 million, or 25 percent, from last year. And with the rise of Robertson, the break with Bush became all the more imperative. Challenged for the first time by another evangelist to his right, Falwell had to deal with Robertson or watch his organization slowly bleed to death.

Falwell's aides insist that nothing has changed, that their boss will be "honoring his commitments to Bush." But what commitments? The other side of the story is that Bush hasn't returned Falwell's phone calls for weeks. That's

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quite a change from the way things were before, when Bush gave Falwell White House access and Washington perks—briefings by the chief of staff, private audiences at the Bush residence—in exchange for an introduction to the hitherto hostile fundamentalist world.

Bush was excited by his Falwell connection. He dropped out of the Trilateral Commission to mollify his new friends and made a fawning appearance at Falwell's Liberty University. In June Bush was the cover boy of the evangelical monthly *Christian Herald*. In the accompanying profile, he insisted, "Yes, I've had some life-changing experiences that have left me with a profound sense of faith in God. . . . Those are the times when a person reaches deep down inside himself and comes to grips with the question of why God put you here, and what does it all mean anyway." He had a video made of that "Christian testimony" at last summer's Christian Bookseller's Convention in Washington. Bush had his handlers hustle select evangelical leaders upstairs to a private suite for special screenings. Not to mention the evangelical leaders that Falwell constantly squired to the vice president's mansion. "It was a real dog and pony show," says one administration official.

But Falwell couldn't deliver. He assured Bush that he had firm commitments from Charles Stanley and Jimmy Draper, both past presidents of the country's largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention. In September both of them started leaning toward Robertson. The current president of the Southern Baptists, Adrian Rodgers, with whom Bush has been frantically trying to set up an audience, appears to be for Robertson as well. And then there's Jimmy Swaggart, whom Bush people thought they had successfully weaned from the Kemp campaign. Falwell, in fact, had a September 11 "CBS Morning News" appearance planned with Swaggart, at which time he expected the Louisiana evangelist to declare for Bush. Swaggart instead backed Robertson, and according to syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, Bush was so upset by the defection that he called up Swaggart himself. (Bush's people unequivocally deny the story.)

The whole Bush-Falwell connection started because Bush thought that if he could line up the support of evangelical leaders, evangelical voters would follow. There is nothing new about this idea, of course, but with 22 million evangelical voters at stake, Bush and the other GOP presidential candidates have been playing the endorsement game with a vengeance. Bush's liaison with the evangelical community, Doug Wead, says, "Out of the leading evangelicals who've made endorsements, we've had as many as anyone." This fall Wead sees the battle for evangelical endorsements heating up. Next on the Bush hit list? Gospel-rock singer Amy Grant. "That's going to be a big battleground," Wead explains, referring to Grant's record-buying constituency. "Half of evangelicals are under 35, yet most of the leaders of influence appeal to the over-35 crowd."

It isn't just GOP candidates who believe in the power of endorsements. The press buys into it too. Evans and Novak have called Robertson the "unified candidate of the born-agains, here to stay as potential kingmaker in the Republican Party" because of his success in lining up commitments from evangelical leaders. *Washington Post* reporter Thomas Edsall wrote that by getting the backing of evangelical leaders, Robertson has captured "a substantial portion" of the movement, thereby taking evangelicals "out of the political bargaining process." Because Robertson has Swaggart and Oral Roberts and Charles Stanley and others on his side, he is assumed to have the allegiances of evangelical rank and file the same way Jesse Jackson had the support of blacks.

The problem is that there is no evidence that this is true. Look at Falwell. His backing of Bush had nothing to do with the inclinations of the Moral Majority constituency. "He could have backed Attila the Hun," says a former Falwell aide. "I don't think anyone who has ever worked for Jerry or who works for him now ever knows his real motivation." The same goes for the Falwell deal with Robertson, which seems less an endorsement than an accommodation. "These men don't like each other at all," says one evangelical, pointing to questions of ego and theological differences between Falwell's fundamentalism and Robertson's Pentacostalism.

It's an open question whether evangelical leaders have any sway over their flocks when it comes to political choices. George Marsden, a historian at Duke, is only one of a number of evangelical scholars who have made a career out of demonstrating the factiousness and independence of America's born-agains. "The evangelical movement will not and cannot be controlled by any one person," he says flatly. Everyone can rest easy. Even if George and Jerry get back together again, it's not going to make any difference.

MALCOLM GLADWELL

Malcolm Gladwell is a writer with *Insight* magazine.

Good, clean attacks.

WORTHY MUD

ANSWER A QUICK question on elective politics. First the facts. The campaign for a U.S. Senate seat in a Southern state went down and dirty from the start one year. In television commercials, the Republican candidate accused his Democratic opponent, a soft-spoken moderate, of being an unbending liberal and ideological soulmate of Jesse Jackson. The Democrat, in turn, suggested that his Republican foe was linked to killings by death squads in El Salvador. But in another Senate race in the same state (the races were two years apart), the candidates took the high road. Rather than attack each other recklessly and relentlessly, they used their TV commercials to point up the differences between them on issue after issue. Now the

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question. Which one of these campaigns took place this year?

If you followed the press coverage of the 1986 races, my guess is you picked the campaign with the mudslinging as this year's entry. Well, you're wrong. That raw campaign was in North Carolina in 1984 and pitted GOP Senator Jesse Helms against Democrat James Hunt. The mild-mannered race was this year's North Carolina Senate contest between Democrat Terry Sanford and Republican James Broyhill. These contrasting campaigns touch on two points. One, harshly negative campaigns, marked by attack ads on TV, are hardly new, though the press seems to have just discovered the phenomenon this year. Two, negative campaigning, rather than necessarily bad, is an essential and valuable part of politics.

ATTACKING AN OPPONENT vigorously and mudslinging are not necessarily the same thing. If the attack is highly personal or wildly exaggerated or grossly unfair, then it qualifies as mudslinging. The accusations in the Florida Senate race that Democrat Bob Graham had coddled convicted killers as governor, and that Republican Paula Hawkins had sought to curtail drug enforcement—these were blatant mudslinging. So was Linda Chavez's charge, in the Maryland Senate contest, that Barbara Mikulski is "anti-male." But what is wrong with showing the farm policy of Republican Senator Jim Abdnor of South Dakota in a unfavorable light, as Democrat Tom Daschle did in a TV spot? Not a thing. And was it mudslinging for Democrat Brock Adams to argue aggressively that Senator Slade Gorton had done too little to keep Washington from being considered as a nuclear waste site? That was fair comment by a challenger playing out his proper campaign role as the critic of his opponent's record. By staying positive and merely stating his own position on nuclear waste in TV spots, without going negative and contrasting it with Gorton's, Adams would have left voters partially in the dark. And he would have ignored what was really at issue in the election—not his position, but the incumbent's.

Often attack ads by challengers are the only way real issues enter the campaign dialogue. Incumbents normally prefer to talk vaguely about their influence in Washington and their love for their state. The test of negative campaigning is whether the charges made against an opponent are true and serious. In the California Senate race, Democratic Senator Alan Cranston and Republican Representative Ed Zschau both passed and failed the test. Cranston accused Zschau in one TV commercial of flip-flopping, raising legitimate doubts about Zschau's depth of conviction on issues. Fair enough. But Cranston implied in another ad that Zschau, who voted for sanctions against South Africa, was a supporter of apartheid. Zschau, meanwhile, contrasted his economic views with Cranston's, noting that Cranston has been labeled "biggest spender" by a taxpayers' group and opposed Gramm-Rudman and a balanced budget amendment. Nothing wrong with this. But in a different commercial, Zschau suggested that Cranston was soft on drug dealers because he opposed the death penalty in federal cases in which someone was killed by drugs. True, Cranston voted against that provision, which would apply only in the rarest of cases, but that hardly made him the patron of drug traffickers. The Zschau ad trivialized and distorted a serious issue.

The Cranston-Zschau race was an example of another whipping boy of 1986, the media campaign. Like it or not, media campaigns are here to stay. It borders on the Luddite to argue that candidates should spend their time mingling with voters instead of communicating with them by television. Besides, mingling isn't that easy because practically no one except the party faithful shows up at campaign rallies these days. Not surprisingly, candidates tend to emphasize TV ads, particularly in heavily populated states where they would cross paths with only a minuscule percentage of the electorate even if they tried.

Still, the press abetted the candidates' inclination to skip face-to-face encounters with the public, the press, and the opponent. Such encounters, like presidential press conferences, remain important, if only because candidates are often forced to act spontaneously instead of relying solely on a script. But this year, reporters devoted an inordinate amount of their coverage to TV ads. This had two ill effects. It discouraged candidates from making public appearances, since these got relatively less coverage. And it added little to the public's knowledge of the candidates, since voters were sure to see the ads on television anyway.

THE SANFORD-BROYHILL race in North Carolina exemplified negative media campaigning at its best. Both candidates used "comparative" TV spots in which the opponent's position compared unfavorably with that of the candidate paying for the ad. Comparative spots are frequently the ones best remembered by voters. They also give voters useful, if slanted, information about the candidates—more, in fact, than they are likely to get from TV news reports. In one ad for Sanford, pictures of him and Broyhill were interchanged. With Sanford on screen, the announcer noted that he was a great supporter of public education. With Broyhill, the announcer said he "voted to cut student loans and vocational education." Sanford was presented as "fiscally tough, always balanced his budget" (as governor in the 1960s). Broyhill was zinged for supporting "the biggest tax increase in American history." In a Broyhill spot, Sanford was blamed for enacting a "food tax" that hurt the poor by not exempting groceries from the state sales tax. In response, Sanford aired an ad defending the levy as a "school tax" that raised needed revenues to improve schools. In short, Sanford and Broyhill carried on a reasonably fair debate on real issues through TV commercials, many of them with strongly negative content.

One more thing. Who's responsible when campaigns don't turn out to be as high-minded as North Carolina's? It's fashionable this year to blame political consultants. *Newsweek* said they have mastered "the black arts of modern politicking," including "creative mudslinging." But skilled as they are, consultants are only hired hands. It is up to candidates themselves to decide how to wage their cam-

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paigns. Consultants can play it fair or play it cheap. In North Carolina, the only negative ads produced by consultant Robert Squier for Sanford were the soft-hitting comparative spots. In Florida, Squier produced for Bob Graham the ad suggesting that Paula Hawkins, an anti-drug zealot, was weak on drug enforcement. In each instance, Squier was the messenger. The blame, or credit, belongs with the person who sent the message.

FRED BARNES

English has nothing to fear.

VIVA BILINGUALISM

IN HIS CLASSIC work of crackpot anthropology, *The Japanese Brain*, Dr. Tadanobu Tsunoda told his Japanese readers not to feel bad about their difficulties learning other languages, especially English. "Isn't it remarkable," he said (I am paraphrasing), "that whenever you meet someone who speaks English really well, he turns out to be a drip?"

The Japanese have their own reasons for seeking such reassurance. Their students learn English exactly the way Americans (used to) learn Latin: through long, boring analyses of antique written passages. Not surprisingly, most of them feel about as comfortable making English conversation as I would if Julius Caesar strolled up for a chat. The few Japanese who do speak good English have generally lived overseas—and to that extent have become less Japanese and, by local standards, more like drips.

Still, for all the peculiar Japaneseness of his sentiment, the spirit of Dr. Tsunoda is alive in America today. It is reflected in the general disdain for bilingualism and bilingual education, and in campaigns like the one on California's ballot last week, sponsored by the group called USEnglish, to declare that English is America's "official" language.

Yes, yes, everyone needs to learn English. America doesn't want to become Quebec. We have enough other forces pulling us apart that we don't want linguistic divisions too. But is there any reason to get so worked up about today's Spanish-speaking immigrants, even if they keep learning Spanish while in school? I will confess that I once shared USEnglish-type fears about Spanish language separatism. But having spent a long time reporting among immigrants and seeing how much their children wanted to learn English, I'm not worried anymore. And, having been out of the country most of this year, I've come to think that the whole American language scare rests on two bogus and amazingly parochial assumptions.

The first is a view of bilingualism as a kind of polygamy. That is, according to Western standards it just doesn't work to have two wives. The partners in a marriage require a certain exclusive commitment from each other. If a man gives it to one wife, there's not enough left over to give to someone else. Similarly with language: there's only so much room in a person's brain, and if he speaks one language—let us say Spanish—really well, he'll be all filled up and won't learn English. And if his brain were not a problem, his heart would be, since he can be truly loyal to only one language. I'm burlesquing the argument a little, but not much. Why would anyone worry about students taking "maintenance" courses in Spanish, if not for the fear that Spanish would somehow use up the mental and emotional space English should fill?

In the American context, it's easy to see why people might feel this way. Ninety-nine percent of all Americans can happily live their lives speaking and thinking about no language but English. Foreign-language education has been falling off, and except in unusual circumstances—wars, mainly—it has never had much practical reinforcement anyway. When we come across people in the United States who obviously know a foreign language, the main signal is usually that their English is so poor.

But suppose that mastering a second language is less like having two wives than like having two children. Maybe there's not really a limit in the brain or heart, and spreading attention among several languages—like spreading love among several children—may actually enrich everyone involved. Without going through all the linguistic arguments showing that bilingualism is possible and natural (one impressive recent summary was *Mirror of Language* by Kenji Hakuta, published this year) I will merely say that after about five seconds of talking with someone who really is bilingual, the two-child, rather than two-wife, view comes to make much more sense.

Everyone has heard about the Scandinavians and Swiss, who grow up in a big swirl of languages and can talk easily to anyone they meet. Their example may seem too high-toned to be persuasive in connection with today's Spanish-speaking immigrants, so consider the more down-to-earth illustrations of multilingualism to be found all over Asia.

SEVEN YEARS AGO, the government of Singapore launched a "Speak Mandarin!" campaign, designed to supplant various southern Chinese dialects with Mandarin. (This is roughly similar to a "Speak Like Prince Charles!" campaign being launched in West Virginia.) Since then, competence in Mandarin has gone up—and so has mastery of English. At the beginning of the Speak Mandarin campaign, the pass rate for O-level (high school) exams in English was 41 percent. Now it's 61 percent. During the same period, the O-level pass rate for Mandarin went from 84 percent to 92 percent. The children managed to get better at both languages at once.

Just north of Singapore is Malaysia, another one-time British colony whose main political problem is managing relations among three distinct ethnic groups: Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Each of the groups speaks a different language at home—Malay for the Malays, Cantonese or

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Hokkien for the Chinese, Tamil for the Indians. But if you put any two Malaysians together in a room, it's almost certain that they'll be able to speak to each other, in either Malay or English, since most people are bilingual and many speak three or more languages. (The Chinese generally speak one or two Chinese dialects, plus English and/or Malay. The Indians speak English or Malay on top of Tamil, and many or most Malays speak English.) Neither Tamil nor the Chinese dialects travel well outside the ethnic group, and Malay doesn't travel anywhere else but Indonesia, so most Malaysians have a strong incentive to learn another language.

I should emphasize that I'm talking about people who in no way fit modern America's idea of a rarefied intellectual elite. They are wizened Chinese shopkeepers, unschooled Indian night guards, grubby Malay food-hawkers, in addition to more polished characters who've traveled around the world. Yet somehow they all find room in their brains for more than one language at a time. Is it so implausible that Americans can do the same?

THE SECOND anti-bilingual assumption, rarely stated but clearly there, is that English is some kind of fragile blossom, about to be blown apart by harsh blasts from the Spanish-speaking world. Come on! Never before in world history has a language been as dominant as English is now. In every corner of the world, people realize that their chances to play on the big stage—to make money, have choices, travel—depend on learning English. They don't always succeed, but more and more of them try. In Malaysia, in South China, even in linguo-phobic Japan, my family's main problem as we travel has been coping with people who spring from behind every lamppost and tofu stand, eager to practice the English they've picked up from the shortwave radio. Malaysia ships out tens of thousands of young people each year for studies in the United States, Australia, and England. Guess what language they have to learn before they go.

It may seem that modern America shamelessly coddles its immigrants, with all those Spanish-language street signs and TV broadcasts and "maintenance" courses, which together reduce the incentive to learn English. Well, I've spent most of this year in a position similar to the immigrants', and it's not as comfortable or satisfactory as it may look. Japan makes many more accommodations to the English language than America does to Spanish. Tokyo has four English-language daily newspapers—more than most American cities—plus several magazines. The major train and subway routes have English signs, most big-city restaurants have English menus, all major hotels have English-speaking staff. Students applying for university admission must pass tests in (written) English. Most shopkeepers, policemen, and passers-by can make sense of written-down English messages. Even the Shinkansen, or bullet train, makes its announcements in both Japanese and English—which is comparable to the Eastern shuttle giving each "please have your fares ready" message in Spanish as well as English. The nighttime TV news broadcasts now come in a bilingual version—you push a button on your set to switch from Japanese to English. It is as if the "CBS Evening News" could be simultaneously heard in Spanish.

Does all of this reduce the incentive to learn Japanese, or the feeling of being left out if you don't? Hah! Even though Japanese society is vastly more permeated by English than American society is by Spanish, each day brings ten thousand reminders of what you're missing if you don't know the language. You can't read the mainstream newspapers, can't follow most shows on TV, can't communicate above the "please-give-me-a-ticket-to-Kyoto" level. Without learning the language, you could never hope to win a place as anything but a fringe figure. Some adults nonetheless live out a ghettoized, English-only existence, because Japanese is no cinch, but foreign children raised in Japan pick up the language as the only way to participate.

THE INCENTIVES for America's newcomers to learn English are even stronger. How are an immigrant's children going to go to any college, get any kind of white-collar job, live anything but a straitened, ghetto existence unless they speak English? When are the SATs, Bruce Springsteen songs, and the David Letterman show going to be in Spanish—or Korean, or Tagalog? If Malaysians and rural Chinese can see that English is their route to a wider world, are Guatemalans and Cubans who've made it to America so much more obtuse? And if they keep up their Spanish at the same time, even through the dreaded "maintenance" courses, why don't we count that as a good thing? It's good for them, in making their lives richer and their minds more flexible, and it's good for the country, in enlarging its ability to deal with the rest of the world.

The adult immigrants themselves don't usually succeed in learning English, any more than my wife and I have become fluent in Japanese. But that has been true of America's immigrants for 200 years. (The main exception were the Eastern European Jewish immigrants of the early 20th century, who moved into English faster than Italians, Germans, Poles, or today's Latin Americans.) The Cubans' and Mexicans' children are the ones who learn, as previous immigrants' children have. When someone can find large numbers of children who are being raised in America but don't see English as a necessity, then I'll start to worry.

We don't want to become Quebec—and we're not about to. Quebec, Belgium, Sri Lanka, and other places with language problems have old, settled groups who've lived alongside each other, in mutual dislike, for many years—not new groups of immigrants continually being absorbed. We don't need to declare English our official language, because it already is that—as no one knows better than the immigrants and their children. Anywhere else in the world, people would laugh at the idea that English is in any way imperiled. Let's calm down and enjoy the joke too.

JAMES FALLOWS

James Fallows, the Washington editor of the *Atlantic*, is currently based in Asia.

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SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

SURVIVING AIDS

Unless it is possible to know with absolute certainty that your sex partner is not infected with AIDS, through sex or through drug use, you're taking a chance of becoming infected.

—Surgeon General C. Everett Koop

One never knows, do one?

—Fats Waller

THE THREAT OF AIDS spreading among heterosexuals who do not inject themselves with drugs—"the general population," in the parlance of many government officials—has returned to the news, as it has from time to time since the disease was recognized five-and-a-half years ago. A report released by the National Academy of Sciences October 29, "Confronting AIDS," leaves no doubt about the danger. The best study to date of the AIDS epidemic, the NAS report says there will be at least 9,000 AIDS cases among heterosexuals within five years; and because increasing numbers of women will become infected, there will be at least 3,000 infants born with the disease. The academy panel detailed a lack of direction and coordination in the federal government's efforts against AIDS. In particular, it described attempts to educate the public about the disease and how to avoid it as "woefully inadequate."

Dr. Koop released his report in a great hurry the week before, according to people in the Health and Human Services Department, in order to shield himself and his agency from some of the criticism in the academy's study. Indeed, Koop undertook his study only because President Reagan, asked by a reporter what he was doing about AIDS, paused for a long time during which he could not think of anything, and finally replied that he would tell the surgeon general to prepare a report.

In some ways Koop seemed to be favoring an abandonment of sex as the only way to curb the epidemic, but he made some notable distinctions. For example, he recommended that teenage girls should be taught to say no to all sex, whereas teenage boys should merely be warned against having rectal intercourse with other males. Still, most of Koop's calls for education, including more sex education in grade schools, were welcomed by public health officials, if not by other members of the administration. In addition his frank, open language detailing just how the disease spreads differed sharply from previous exercises in mystifying euphemisms.

You would think from the fuss over the academy study and Koop's report that a great, nationwide danger from AIDS had just been discovered. In fact, the warning signs have been glowing brightly for a long time. The Public Health Service estimates that within five years 250,000 people in this country will have been diagnosed with AIDS, and more Americans will be dying of AIDS every year than are now killed annually in traffic accidents or were killed in the entirety of the Vietnam War. But most of those people will be male homosexuals or drug addicts. The best way to get in the news with AIDS or to get Congress and the administration to act is to emphasize the danger to "the general population." Never mind that the disease will kill hundreds of people at the peak of their productive lives. Never mind that each AIDS patient costs taxpayers between $150,000 and $300,000. It seems we are eager to confront a problem only when it appears at our own doorstep. Well, here it is.

Some true stories:

A 34-year-old woman who had just become a partner in a big Manhattan law firm donated blood during a drive at her office. A few weeks later Red Cross officials told her she has been exposed to the virus that causes AIDS. That means she has a good chance of getting AIDS herself and she must consider herself a carrier capable of infecting others for the rest of her life. Looking back she can't remember how she could possibly have been infected, unless it was a three-day affair with a Frenchman at a Caribbean resort four years ago.

A bartender, 42, at one of the singles' bars on the Upper East Side, died suddenly from the complications of AIDS. He was neither homosexual nor bisexual nor a drug user. For years he had been sleeping with women who frequented the bar, dozens every year. Some were prostitutes. Some were just lonely. One of them gave him AIDS.

I know of a few dozen of these cases. They leave no doubt that the nightmare of the sexual revolution turning to death is visiting middle-class heterosexuals just as it visited gay men. These cases are the ones most likely to catch the interest of readers of this magazine. They are the tales that will inspire Congress to spend more money for AIDS research and education. But although the danger is real, AIDS is spreading far more slowly among the middle class than it is in other parts of the society. For now the greatest danger of heterosexual AIDS is to black and Puerto Rican teenagers living in the ghettos of Northeastern cities. Drug addicts, by sharing needles and syringes, already have spread the AIDS virus widely in the ghetto. Kids there, like all kids, sleep around, and inevitably the virus will spread through sex to non-drug-using teenagers.

THE EVIDENCE is already accumulating. For more than a year the armed forces have been testing all recruits for antibodies to the AIDS virus. Nationwide, one out of 2,000 recruits tests positive. But in areas where there is already a lot of AIDS, the rates are much higher. In New York City and San Francisco, one out of 100 tests positive. For recruits from Manhattan the rate is one in 50. It appears that most of them are neither intravenous drug users nor homosexuals. They are just ghetto kids. The danger remains that poor minorities will not be seen as part of that all-important "general public," and that prevention efforts in those areas will be too little and too late.

Almost from the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, scientists have known that men can transmit the dis-

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1987 SPECIAL OFFER 1987

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Minneapolis Tribune

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ease to women through regular vaginal intercourse. Some of the earliest cases were the wives or female lovers of drug addicts. These were the women who gave birth to AIDS babies. For a time the question was whether in this country women could transmit AIDS as easily to men. Several recent studies show that women in this country can indeed infect men during regular sexual intercourse. The most popular model among scientists now is that the virus travels from host to host inside a type of white blood cell that can cross—in either direction—though the mucous skin lining the inside of the penis and vagina.

In Africa there has been no doubt about heterosexual transmission. Since 1984 it has been clear that AIDS is a major epidemic there, spreading through heterosexual sex and threatening thousands, possibly millions, of people. Why, if it is spreading that way in Africa, can't it spread that way here?

It is not easy to investigate AIDS in Africa. The Africans are suspicious of outsiders' motives, fearful that we will blame them for yet another of the world's problems. I was able to visit the Kagera region of Tanzania on the shore of Lake Victoria, just south of the Uganda border. This part of Eastern equatorial Africa is the center of the outbreak. At the local hospital, many beds were filled with people suffering from what the residents call "slim disease," because victims lose weight rapidly. Slim disease is AIDS. The overworked young physician in charge said he doubted whether most AIDS victims even appear at the hospital anymore, because they know that doctors can do little for them and "they prefer to die at home with their families."

MANY PEOPLE in the United States have suggested that mosquitos, poor sanitation, or some mysterious ritual could be responsible for the spread of AIDS in Africa. But when you see the victims there, you realize that they are all in their 20s and 30s, their sexually active years. Mosquitos bite everyone. Poor sanitation affects the entire population. Almost every scientist who has studied AIDS in Africa is convinced the disease spreads there only through sex and blood transfusions.

The best guess about why AIDS is so widespread in Africa is simply that the virus has been around longer there. Dr. Jonathan Mann, who is now head of the AIDS task force of the World Health Organization, spent several years studying the disease in Zaire. He believes that the infection in a population must reach "a critical mass."

"It appears," he said, "that five or even ten years can go by with a relatively small percentage of the population infected and then once a certain percentage is reached, there is a great amplification of the numbers of infected people. It is simply a matter of numbers."

That phenomenon occurred among gays in the United States. The first cases appeared among those who were the most promiscuous, some having hundreds or even a thousand different sex partners a year. Stored blood samples show that in 1977 only one or two percent of the gay populations of New York and San Francisco were infected with the virus. But the virus has spread so far that 70 percent of those populations are now infected. So a man now who has unprotected sex with only one other man has an excellent chance of becoming infected with the AIDS virus.

Similarly in Africa, AIDS spread first among the most promiscuous. In some areas promiscuity is a cultural custom. For example, in Ruanda, which has a high incidence of AIDS, women as a method of birth control do not have sex with their husbands for two years after they have a child. During that time it is expected that the husband will have sex with so-called "free women." In other areas promiscuity is a recent phenomenon, often the result of forced urbanization and poverty. Even though AIDS began among the promiscuous, it soon spread so widely that now almost anyone can be infected. There is no reason to believe the same thing could not happen here.

The course that AIDS has followed in Haiti may serve as an even more important warning. AIDS appeared in Haiti about the same time as it appeared in the United States. The first cases were among bisexual men who worked as prostitutes servicing American and European tourists. From the bisexuals it spread quickly through sex and by blood transfusion to others in the population. In 1981 12 percent of the AIDS cases in Haiti were females. Now women account for 40 percent of the cases.

It is likely that AIDS spread so quickly among heterosexuals in Haiti because of promiscuity. Polygamy is common, and among the very poor sex is the only activity that is free and enjoyable. In addition the terrible poverty forces many women to sell themselves. But just because it spread faster in Haiti does not mean it could not spread in the same way here.

There were more than 25,000 cases of AIDS in this country at last count. But it is important to remember that this disease has a very long incubation period. It can be up to ten years from the time a person is infected until he or she shows any symptoms. During those ten years the infected person can infect others without knowing it through sex or blood exchange. Dr. Robert Redfield of Walter Reed Army Hospital says, "If we simply look at AIDS cases, we are ten years behind. To understand this epidemic we must look at who has been exposed to the virus."

Scientists estimate that between one and one-and-a-half million Americans are already infected with the virus. No one knows how many of them will ultimately get sick. The best guess now is between 25 percent and 50 percent. But all the evidence now indicates that AIDS is a lifelong infection and that once infected a person is capable of giving the disease to others.

STATEMENTS FROM administration officials, particularly Margaret Heckler when she was secretary of health and human services, could give you the idea that technology is racing to the rescue and we will have a cure or a vaccine within a few years. Asked about that at his recent news conference, Dr. Koop said, "That idea went to Ireland with Mrs. Heckler." The truth is that while scientists have learned an enormous amount about the AIDS virus, they have also found that it is one of the most

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complex infectious agents they have ever encountered. A treatment or a vaccine is many, many years away.

So education is our best bet. Everyone, particularly sexually active youngsters, should know that having sex without a condom and/or spermicidal jelly (which can help prevent a woman from being infected) is risking your life. The danger in the ghetto is great already. Among the middle class the risk is less, but it increases daily.

The other public health measure available now is wider testing to determine whether a person has been exposed to the virus. If more people were tested, we would have a much better idea of how far and where the virus is spreading now. Gay rights groups and others have often opposed widespread testing, fearing that those who test positive might lose their homes, their jobs, and their health and life insurance. Those fears are not groundless, and most public health officials oppose compulsory testing. But there is no excuse for not aggressively offering the test with a strict guarantee of confidentiality to anyone who wants it. It is a good bet that if most of those million-plus infected people knew they were carriers, they would take precautions not to spread the disease. Right now most of them do not know.

In New York City, which has the highest number of AIDS cases in the country, it has been hard to get the AIDS test even if you want it. Doctors who treat drug addicts say that they are often blocked by the city bureaucracy when they try to order AIDS tests for their patients. Yet it is drug addicts who present the greatest danger of spreading the disease to other heterosexuals. And it is female drug addicts and women who sleep with male addicts who most often give birth to babies with AIDS—babies who have a few years of a miserable life before they die from the disease.

One of the oldest tenets of public health policy is that anyone who catches one sexually transmitted disease is a good candidate to have another one. Anyone who appears at a VD clinic with gonorrhea gets tested for syphilis. But the VD clinics in New York have not even offered the AIDS test, even though the presumably promiscuous people who go there for treatment would seem to be likely candidates. When I asked the city health commissioner, Dr. Steven Joseph, why that was so, he replied, "AIDS is not a venereal disease. AIDS is an infectious disease which can be transmitted sexually." Others may puzzle over the meaning of that reply. Meanwhile, the sound, simple public health policies that might slow the spread of AIDS are being ignored. In most states, couples are required to have a test for syphilis before they get married. Common sense would seem to dictate that the AIDS test be added to the requirement.

In many ways the task of stopping AIDS is simple in the United States compared to other places, such as Africa and Haiti, where the disease is widespread. We have a literate population, and there is an excellent chance education can be effective. Dr. Mann of the World Health Organization is also optimistic about the chances in other parts of the world. "Cultures," he said, "know how to survive. Societies know how to survive. And when faced with a threat to their young and previously healthy men and women, cultures will find ways to adapt." We can only hope that such optimism is justified.

ROBERT BAZELL

Robert Bazell is the science correspondent for NBC News. Beginning with this issue, he will be writing regularly for TNR under the logo "Science and Society."

How the White House ran the secret 'contra' war.

REAGAN'S SHADOW CIA

BY ROBERT PARRY AND BRIAN BARGER

THE CRASH OF an arms-laden cargo plane in southern Nicaragua on October 5 exposed more than an operation mounted by private American mercenaries or, as one critic put it, by ex-CIA men with "a wink and a nod" from the U.S. government. It brought into sudden focus a highly covert paramilitary network of former intelligence operatives working for the White House. The secret organization was set up by Reagan administration officials in early 1984 and enabled the White House to circumvent a congressional ban against "directly or indirectly" aiding the *contra* rebels fighting to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. It was a shadow CIA—hidden from Congress, unaccountable to the American public, and answering only to the White House.

The secret White House program reunited an old-boys network of former CIA operatives dating back to the Vietnam War and the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Many of the participants—from the program's chief organizers to the men kicking cargo out of the planes—had worked for the CIA. Eugene Hasenfus, the cargo handler who was

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captured after the October 5 crash, flew missions for the CIA-owned airline Air America during the Indochina War. So did William Cooper, the pilot killed in the crash.

Documents on the plane led to other CIA connections. In February Wallace Blaine Sawyer Jr., the co-pilot killed when the plane was shot down, flew cargo planes to a U.S.-built airstrip in Honduras for a Miami company called Southern Air Transport. Southern Air was owned by the CIA until 1973. Over the past three years—as the *contra* aid network evolved—Southern Air emerged as a leading Pentagon contractor transporting military equipment to Central America and elsewhere. Southern Air's address was also used by a mysterious firm, Corporate Air Services, when it purchased the cargo plane that was shot down.

The former CIA operatives, involved in the *contra* air resupply network, worked out of El Salvador's Ilopango military airfield. Senior Salvadoran officials say the air base would not be available for such operations without high-level U.S. approval. These former operatives also carried credentials from the Salvadoran armed forces, identifying them as U.S. military advisers.

Hasenfus, now on trial in Nicaragua, says the supply operation was directed by two Cuban-Americans. Both, he said, worked for the CIA. One of them was named Felix Rodriguez, and also known as Max Gomez. According to a report prepared by a private arms dealer involved in the aid network, Rodriguez/Gomez was placed at Ilopango airfield by Donald Gregg, a senior aide to Vice President Bush, and by Nestor Sanchez, a top Pentagon official responsible for Central American military aid programs. Gregg and Sanchez have held senior-level jobs at the CIA, and Bush was the director of the agency in 1976.

But the connections go deeper still, ultimately tying in to a White House program started in early 1984 to keep *contra* aid alive despite fierce congressional opposition. Senior White House officials, facing a congressional aid cutoff, prepared plans to establish a "private aid" network. This more covert operation would replace the CIA in training, arming, and directing the *contra* rebels in their war against the leftist Sandinista government.

The initial "private aid" plan was drafted by Marine Lt. Col. Oliver L. North, a National Security Council deputy director for political-military affairs, according to administration officials involved in the program. After discussion of North's three-page memo by senior NSC staff officers, then-NSC adviser Robert McFarlane presented it orally to the president. The officials said Reagan approved the operation.

NORTH, WORKING with Pentagon, State Department, and other White House officials, implemented the plan. He called upon former covert intelligence officers to handle the operational side of the program, according to U.S. officials and *contra* leaders. The White House recruited retired Army Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, whose intelligence background dates back to World War II and the CIA's forerunner, the OSS. Singlaub organized fundraising for the *contras* and provided military advice.

Singlaub acknowledges clearing his actions with North and meeting frequently with CIA Director William J. Casey to discuss the operation. Singlaub said he had an arrangement with North "like in the military" when a junior officer would tell a superior what he planned to do. North's silence was regarded as affirmative approval. Two former intelligence officers described the *contra* support program as a "classic" covert operation with deniability built in for the White House at every level.

Singlaub, through his leadership of the World Anti-Communist League, traveled extensively to solicit aid for the *contras* from right-wing organizations and governments receiving U.S. military assistance. One senior White House official who participated in the discussions said the "big three" countries expected to provide substantial aid were South Korea, Taiwan, and Israel. Sources close to Singlaub said sizable donations came from businessmen close to the governments of South Korea and Taiwan, the nations that founded WACL in the 1960s. Singlaub also became involved, through brokers in Europe, with Israeli sales to the *contras* of weapons and ammunition captured from the PLO during Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

OVER TIME, other former CIA operatives were put in key operational positions in support of the *contras*. Bay of Pigs veteran Rodriguez/Gomez, who according to Hasenfus was in charge of the *contra* air resupply operation, was a CIA adviser to the Bolivian armed forces when they captured and killed Cuban revolutionary Ché Guevara in 1967. Hasenfus said the other Cuban-American CIA agent directing the *contra* air wing was named Ramon Medina. Based on a photograph shown him by Sandinista officials, Hasenfus later identified Medina as Luis Posada Carriles, a veteran of CIA anti-Castro operations in the 1960s. Posada Carriles is now a fugitive wanted in Venezuela on charges that he helped plan the October 1976 midair bombing of a Cubana airliner with 73 people aboard, including the Cuban national fencing team. A U.S. official subsequently confirmed that Medina was Posada Carriles.

It is still not precisely clear how much day-to-day direction the resupply operation received from administration officials. Salvadoran telephone bills from a safe house used by Rodriguez/Gomez show repeated calls in September to North's private lines at the National Security Council. North, through a spokesman, responded that he never knowingly received calls from the safe house. Other calls went to Stanford Technology Trading Inc., a firm outside Washington run by retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard V. Secord. The former general, who helped negotiate the sale of AWACS planes to Saudi Arabia, reportedly acted as an intermediary for gaining Saudi financial support for the *contras*. Secord denies the allegation.

The "private" network did succeed in keeping covert American aid flowing to the *contras* while the administration pressured Congress to resume funding of the *contras*. (Congress reluctantly agreed to provide $27 million in nonlethal aid in 1985, and then approved $100 million in military and other aid last month.) One retired senior CIA

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official, though, said the *contra* aid network had spun "out of control" and could end up resurrecting deep public distrust of the CIA. He said the operation's lack of accountability contributed to reported widespread corruption and even narcotics trafficking.

In early 1984, the Reagan administration was faced with the stark choice: either bow to congressional demands to halt U.S. aid to the *contras* or devise some way to circumvent the legal restrictions.

The administration had long chafed under the legal requirement to keep the House and Senate intelligence committees fully informed about covert activities. CIA officials complained that the committees leaked sensitive information and obstructed operations, such as the one that President Reagan authorized in 1981 to organize a Nicaraguan rebel army. Congress, in turn, complained that the CIA had consistently misled the oversight panels as to the goals and actions of the *contra* program. The administration had justified the *contra* operation as a way to interdict weapons smuggled to leftist Salvadoran guerrillas by the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. But Congress soon suspected the objective was much more ambitious and barred the CIA from trying to overthrow the Sandinista government.

The tension between Congress and the executive branch erupted into a full-scale confrontation in early 1984 when the oversight committees learned belatedly that the CIA had directed the mining of Nicaragua's harbors and then told the *contras* to claim public credit for the operations. The mining controversy led to the cutoff of CIA aid in the spring of 1984. Congress approved an amendment sponsored by Representative Edward Boland of Massachusetts banning outright all U.S. military assistance to the *contras* beginning in October 1984. The ban—after the CIA had spent an estimated $80 million—prohibited the CIA, the Pentagon, or any other entity of the U.S. government involved in intelligence from "directly or indirectly" aiding the *contras* militarily.

Although many in Congress believed the Boland amendment was so tightly written that the administration would be forced to the sidelines, Oliver North had already made clear to the rebels that U.S. assistance would continue. Edgar Chamorro, then one of eight directors of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), the largest rebel army, said that in early 1984, North assured the FDN "of continued United States government support, notwithstanding the refusal of the Congress to appropriate more funds." Chamorro made his statement in a sworn affidavit given to the World Court after Nicaragua accused the United States of violating international law. In January 1985, two close associates of North quoted him as saying,

Who's Who In The Contra Network

The White House

Robert McFarlane
NSC adviser who obtained Reagan's approval in early 1984 for "private aid" network to aid the *contras*.
Oliver North
NSC official who proposed the network to evade congressional aid ban.
Robert Owen
North's intermediary with the various *contra* armies.
Donald Gregg
Former CIA official who helped Felix Rodriguez (see below) get his job.

The 'Private' Generals:

John Singlaub
Leader of World Anti-Communist League and close colleague of North's.
Richard Secord
Retired Air Force general, apparently active in funneling money to *contras* through other countries.
Tom Posey
Leader of Civilian Military Assistance (CMA), a paramilitary group that supports the *contras*.

Field Operatives

Eugene Hasenfus
Hapless survivor of October 5 plane crash in Nicaragua who says he worked for the CIA.
Felix Rodriguez (a.k.a. **Max Gomez**)
Bay of Pigs veteran who directed the *contra* resupply effort from an air base in El Salvador.
Luis Posada Carriles (a.k.a. **Ramon Medina**)
Rodriguez's colleague, wanted for terrorism.
John Hull
American whose Costa Rican farm is a *contra* base.

The Miami Connection

Leon Kellner
The U.S. attorney in Miami, investigating a 1985 illegal arms shipment to the *contras*.
Jesus Garcia
The Miami man whose revelations led to Kellner's investigation.
Jose Coutin
Aide to Posey and government informant against Garcia.
Alan Saum
Another aide to Posey who also helped arrest Garcia.
D.C. Diaz and Dennis Hamburger
Officers who used CMA's help to arrest Garcia.
Jack Terrell
A former CMA leader who says he discussed the assassinations with the *contras*.

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"If it weren't for those liberals in Congress, we wouldn't be doing half of what we do illegally."

Operating at the edges of the law, White House officials used "cutouts," or intermediaries, to insulate themselves from direct contact with some covert operatives. One conservative activist who played that role was Robert W. Owen. Although not on the government payroll, Owen worked out of North's office in late 1984 and served as his liaison to the *contras*. In the fall of 1985, Owen's personal consulting firm was given a $50,000 contract with the State Department office administering the $27 million in "humanitarian" aid to the rebels.

One prominent rebel official said Owen "represented North" as almost "a proconsul" to *contra* leaders. A well-placed U.S. government official said Owen acted as North's go-between to the rebels and sat in on military-related meetings that North "considered risky" in terms of the Boland amendment. Owen, for example, helped organize Nicaraguan Indian military operations in Honduras in late 1984 and early 1985, and tried to establish a 200-man force in Costa Rica in early 1985, according to *contra* and American sources.

Teofilo Archibald Wilson, a leader of Nicaraguan Indians fighting the Sandinistas, described how the Owen-North connection worked. Wilson met with North in June 1985 to complain that the FDN had refused to share promised military supplies. Wilson said North agreed to "solve the problem" and told the Indian leaders to go to Miami, where they would be contacted. Wilson said that several days later, Owen arrived in Miami to discuss the situation further and give the Indians cash to pay for their rooms. Upon their return to Honduras, Wilson and two other Indian leaders said the CIA station chief brokered an agreement that brought two planeloads of ammunition.

Owen also collaborated with John Hull, an American who owns a farm in northern Costa Rica and whom several rebel officials have identified as a CIA asset working with the rebels. Jack Terrell, then the field commander of a pro-*contra* group called Civilian Military Assistance (CMA), said he met Owen and Hull at a hotel room in Houston in December 1984. Terrell said that Hull identified himself as the liaison between the CIA and the rebels, and that Owen called himself "a liaison officer for a government agency that had a vested interest in this meeting."

TERRELL SAID OWEN and Hull sought CMA's help in organizing a Costa Rican front for the Honduran-based FDN and discussed the number of American volunteer trainers needed. Owen cautioned that the Americans could not be seen as entering Costa Rica to train *contras*. Terrell said he called FDN leader Adolfo Calero, who stressed the importance of describing the plan exactly to Owen so he could relay the information back to Washington.

A month later, at President Reagan's second inaugural in Washington, CMA founder Tom Posey and a former U.S. official met with Owen. They said Owen described himself as representing North. They said Owen urged CMA to postpone a planned operation in Honduras and instead assist the FDN open a military front in Costa Rica. CMA agreed to send a training team to Costa Rica to help build a "southern front," long a dream of CIA strategists seeking to squeeze Nicaragua from north and south. (That effort ultimately foundered in April 1985 when two members of the team led an attack on a town in southern Nicaragua. Costa Rican authorities responded by arresting five trainers on charges of violating Costa Rican neutrality.)

THE REAGAN administration has never acknowledged any violation of the congressional ban, but neither has it offered a comprehensive explanation of its contacts with the "private aid" network. One White House official, speaking for the administration but insisting on anonymity, denied any wrongdoing, but added that it was "quite possible that Reagan and McFarlane discussed how to help" the *contras* in the face of the cutoff. In response to one inquiry from the House Intelligence Committee, McFarlane wrote on September 5, 1985, that no one on the NSC staff had violated "the letter or spirit of the law."

But the hidden U.S. government role underscores a key fact of the *contra* war since it started in 1981: its success hinged on outside training and often direct U.S. control. Early expectations at the CIA that the *contras* could oust the Sandinistas by the end of 1983 were dashed when the FDN proved unable to hold any territory or win significant popular support inside Nicaragua. The frustration led to a meeting in mid-1983 in Honduras, chaired by CIA Director Casey. After the meeting, the CIA assumed direct responsibility for a series of port raids, including the destruction of oil reserves at the Pacific port of Corinto, and later for the mining of Nicaragua's harbors.

On January 5, 1984, at the town of Potosi, and at San Juan del Sur on March 7, 1984, American CIA personnel flying Hughes 500 helicopters exchanged fire with Sandinista forces, government sources said. One intelligence official said the Potosi attack was ordered by a CIA officer out of frustration that Nicaraguan pilots could not do the job.

Hasenfus offered a similar explanation for creation of the air resupply operation. In an interview in a prison outside Managua, he said the *contras*, who also own a small fleet of planes, did not have the pilots or aircraft to carry out effective air drops. "Let's just say our flights hit the target," Hasenfus said. The original plan, he said, was to buy supply planes, train the *contras* to use them, and then sell the aircraft to the *contras*. But Hasenfus said that "just never materialized," and "all of a sudden they needed flights and the flights started to go" with American pilots and crews.

Although the October 5 plane crash brought to light many new details of the *contra* aid network, one area that is still unclear is where the funding came from after Congress cut off aid. One U.S. government official involved in the program recently estimated that no more than $17 million was channeled to the *contras* through private groups. Yet other officials estimate the cost of sustaining the *contra* war at between $100 million and $200 million. One possible explanation is that the *contras* had access to a variety of

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funding sources, many originating with or arranged by the United States.

Earlier this year the General Accounting Office concluded that more than half of the $27 million in non-lethal assistance approved by Congress last year for the *contras* could not be tracked. Records of bank accounts used by brokers for the funds revealed that millions of dollars were transferred into offshore bank accounts, paid to the Honduran military, or given to Miami brokers who worked closely with the *contras*. A draft GAO audit has also concluded that $15,000 earmarked for purchase of clothes for Indian rebels based in Costa Rica was diverted to buy ammunition.

One U.S. official involved in the *contra* program also said that the diversion of U.S. Economic Support Funds (ESF) through El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Israel was vital to financing the secret war. One American arms dealer who has sold weapons to the *contras* said some arms were purchased with "black money," a term for CIA funds that are concealed in padded U.S. military contracts.

Other evidence points to the rebel forces using profits from drug trafficking to pay for the war. One U.S. intelligence report claimed that $250,000 from cocaine smuggling was used to buy a helicopter and other military equipment for troops loyal to Eden Pastora, a leader of the Costa Rican-based force Revolutionary Democratic Alliance (ARDE). American law enforcement officials have said other *contra* organizations operating in northern Costa Rica, including the FDN, engaged in drug trafficking, often with Cuban-Americans from Miami.

But on October 18 the *contras'* money problems eased considerably. President Reagan signed into law the congressional authorization for the $100 million aid package. Two years after Congress banned aid and two weeks after Eugene Hasenfus parachuted out of the fiery plane, U.S. military aid to the *contras* was legal once again.

The compromised investigation.

STUCK IN MIAMI

BY MURRAY WAAS

Miami

Federal law enforcement officials say that the Justice Department has enough information to indict at least four people active in the Reagan administration's so-called "private aid" network helping the *contra* rebels in Nicaragua. The four were part of a group that arranged a large illegal arms shipment from a Fort Lauderdale airport to a *contra* base in Costa Rica in March 1985. Yet six months after authorities established a solid case against the men, no indictments have been returned. Meanwhile, the only participant who is in jail is Jesus Garcia, the man who first brought the illegal arms shipment to the attention of law enforcement officials.

Garcia is doing time for illegal possession of a machine gun while his former friends go unprosecuted—even though the FBI has copious evidence that they illegally possessed and smuggled dozens of machine guns, at least 30 automatic rifles, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, hundreds of mortar shells, and even a 14-foot cannon. Garcia's predicament is the result of a criminal investigation that has apparently been pressured from the top and compromised at the bottom.

Two federal law enforcement officials say that Attorney General Edwin Meese and former Deputy Attorney General Lowell Jensen applied pressure to slow the investigation into the illegal arms shipment. Other officials confirm that Meese and Jensen have followed the case in close detail, even reading the investigative files, although these officials say they have no firsthand knowledge of any effort to slow or halt the probe.

Leon Kellner, the U.S. attorney in Miami directing the wider investigation into illegal activities by the *contras'* "private aid" network, rejects the allegation. "I can give you a categorical, on-the-record denial that the attorney general or anyone else from Washington had applied any pressure whatsoever on me," Kellner says, although he concedes that he has had "about a half dozen conversations" about the *contra* investigation with Meese and Jensen over the past year.

HERE IS THE information in the FBI's files. In early March 1985 two Cuban-Americans, who had stored crates of weapons in the homes of their relatives in Miami, decided to ship the arms to the *contras*. The Cuban-Americans, veterans of the Bay of Pigs invasion who have recruited other anti-communist Cubans to fight the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, enlisted two American friends to help. Garcia, a booking officer at the Dade County jail, was one. A mercenary named Stevie Carr was the other.

On March 6, Garcia and Carr helped load the weapons into vans and transported them to the Fort Lauderdale airport. The chartered plane carrying the weapons flew to the Ilopango air base in El Salvador, a key base of operations for the "private aid" network supplying the *contras*. Eugene Hasenfus, the Wisconsin man who survived the October 5 crash of another plane carrying weapons for the *contras*, says it has been regularly used as a transshipment point for *contra* supplies. The crates of weapons were unloaded by Salvadoran soldiers and stored in nearby warehouses. Within a week, the arms were delivered to a farm in northern Costa Rica, near the Nicaraguan border. The property is owned by John Hull, a former CIA operative who is active in aiding the *contras*.

One Justice Department official says that Kellner told

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him that Meese's and Jensen's interest in the probe of this shipment was "intense" last March and April. Congress was then debating whether to approve President Reagan's request for $100 million in military and non-lethal aid to the *contras*. The official quotes Kellner as saying: "I think they [Meese and Jensen] wanted to be sure as hell we had no plans to indict anybody before the vote. Everyone knew it was going to be close and publicity from down here [Miami] could have a tremendous effect on what happens in Washington."

Another American apparently involved in the shipment was Tom Posey, the head of a pro-*contra* paramilitary group based in Alabama called Civilian Military Assistance (CMA). Sources say that the FBI file on the *contra* investigation contains statements from individuals who have first-hand knowledge that Posey even donated his own shotgun and a sniper rifle. Those same weapons as well as several others from the Fort Lauderdale shipment were later confiscated from a group of mercenaries by Costa Rican authorities. The serial number of the sniper rifle showed it was registered to Tom Posey. But Posey was not indicted.

Jesus Garcia, never known for his street smarts, has been less fortunate. He now sits in a federal correctional center outside Miami. He was convicted on December 17, 1985, for possession of a machine gun, an everyday offense in Miami in the 1980s. But Garcia was not apprehended by normal law enforcement procedures. He was arrested solely because of a falling out with CMA commander Tom Posey. And two law enforcement officers gave misleading testimony to secure Garcia's conviction.

GARCIA'S ORDEAL began a little less than a year before. One night in January 1985, Tom Posey was brought to Dade County jail. He had been arrested at Miami International Airport when an X-ray machine detected a .38 automatic pistol in his luggage. Posey later pleaded guilty to charges of illegal possession of the handgun. Garcia was the booking officer. Garcia, who immediately recognized Posey from an appearance on "Nightline," admired his detainee for his anti-communist views and his support of the *contras*. Garcia allowed Posey to remain in an unsecured area, brought him coffee, and listened to his stories. Garcia was surprised and pleased when Posey called him the next day. Over the next several weeks, Posey introduced Garcia to several other key individuals involved in the "private aid" network for the *contras*. Soon Garcia was accepted into the tightly knit group.

Garcia says he attended meetings in early 1985 where Posey and others discussed plans to bomb the American Embassy in Costa Rica and kill Lewis Tambs, who was soon to be named the U.S. ambassador. Tambs had previously been ambassador to Colombia, where he earned the enmity of Jorge Ochoa, Colombia's largest exporter of cocaine, for his anti-drug efforts. Garcia says he was told that Ochoa had put a $1 million price tag on Tambs's head. An official with the Drug Enforcement Agency confirms that Ochoa had indeed put a price on Tambs's head. Garcia says that Posey and the others discussed collecting the million dollars, which they could use to finance arms purchases for the *contras*.

Posey denies that he ever discussed such plans. But Peter Glibbery, an American mercenary now in jail in Costa Rica, says that he heard a similar story from John Hull, the American whose farm in northern Costa Rica was the destination of the Fort Lauderdale arms shipment. Glibbery recalls asking Hull if he could take some Claymore mines to a nearby *contra* camp. Glibbery says Hull refused, saying that "we need them for the embassy job." Jack Terrell, a former field commander for CMA, said that other members of the "private aid" network had told him about meetings where the bombing plot was discussed. "They cooked up the scheme . . . to collect the reward and blame it on the Sandinistas," Terrell says.

Such conversations were apparently not unheard of among the pro-*contra* activists. Terrell also says that he attended a meeting at the Miami home of Adolfo Calero, the leader of the *contras*, during which plots to assassinate Eden Pastora, a rival anti-Sandinista rebel, were discussed. Terrell says Posey, John Hull, and Rob Owen, a conservative activist working out of the National Security Council, discussed kidnapping and killing Pastora. Terrell was keeping a diary at the time. He provided a copy to congressional investigators. It says in part: "Seems Rob Owens [sic] is in on most of this . . . must appear that Sandinistas did it. Discussion on capturing Zero [Pastora] and having men dress in captured uniforms. . . . Am told to let Hull know when to move." Posey, Hull, and Owen deny the charge.

Garcia told me that he strongly expressed his reservations about the scheme to kill Lewis Tambs: "I told them that I would do almost anything for the [*contra*] cause—except kill Americans." Posey and his colleagues stopped discussing such plans in front of Garcia after that. But they trusted him enough to keep him involved in their activities.

IN JULY 1985, two journalists working in Costa Rica, Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, also heard about the plot on Tambs's life. They informed Costa Rican authorities. According to someone who worked closely with Posey at the time, an official of the Costa Rican government relayed the information to Posey. Posey and his associates knew they had an informant in their midst. The name of Jesus Garcia came up. Hadn't Garcia opposed the assassination and embassy bombing plans? Posey and the others became convinced Garcia was the informant.

One Posey associate recalls an all-night meeting about Garcia at which Tom Posey discussed luring Garcia to Central America and killing him there. On July 21, 1985, Garcia received a phone call from Posey, inviting him to see the CMA operation in Honduras. Garcia was eager to make the trip, but, for reasons explained below, never went.

Within an hour of Posey's call, Garcia received another

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call, this one from Jose Coutin, Posey's Miami representative. Garcia says Coutin asked him to help procure a machine gun. Coutin says Garcia volunteered to supply a machine gun. In any event, Garcia subsequently procured one. Coutin, while working with Posey, also had been a confidential informant for the FBI since 1983. Coutin says he was working with a Miami police detective named D. C. Diaz and Dennis Hamburger, an agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF). Diaz and Hamburger instructed Coutin to have Garcia bring the machine gun to Coutin's house at a designated time. There Diaz and Hamburger equipped Coutin with a "body wire" that would record the conversation for use as evidence at a trial. From a surveillance vehicle parked nearby, Hamburger and Diaz would photograph the scene.

Garcia never showed up. "You've probably heard of the gang who couldn't shoot straight," says John Mattes, a public defender who represented Garcia during his trial. "Well, Jesus Garcia is the guy who couldn't get to his own bust on time. The fact that he was so slow and lazy that day saved his neck that first time around."

WITHIN A FEW DAYS, Garcia received another call from Jose Coutin, saying that an associate of Posey's was passing through Miami on his way to Central America and needed—what else?—a machine gun. That night Garcia was out late drinking with friends when his wife tracked him down to report that a man saying he worked for Tom Posey was at the airport and was frantically trying to get in touch. Garcia, always honored when anyone associated with Posey wanted to talk with him, immediately drove to the airport at 3 a.m. to meet with the man.

The man was an erratic adventurer who called himself "Major" Alan Saum (although he never was a major). Saum worked closely with Posey and Civilian Military Assistance. Saum told Garcia that he was flying to Honduras in the morning to carry out a "mission." Garcia assumed Saum was the one who needed the machine gun. As the two men talked, Garcia told Saum about the plots to blow up the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica and assassinate Lewis Tambs. Saum told Garcia he had a similar "mission": to blow up the Soviet and Cuban Embassies in Managua. Would Garcia like to come along? Garcia quickly agreed. Garcia took Saum home and proudly showed him the machine gun and invited him to stay.

The next day the two men, accompanied by two Cuban-Americans, attempted to leave for Honduras. Garcia was saved from making the potentially fatal trip because he didn't have a passport. Still eager to go to Honduras, Garcia took Saum to see a Colombian friend of his who owned a private plane. They were trying to convince the man to loan them the plane when Saum asked if there was anything they could do to return the favor. The Colombian said he had a friend in jail for cocaine trafficking and wanted him released. No problem, Saum said. With his powerful friends in Washington, the drug dealer could be sprung in no time.

The government's explanation of how Garcia came to be arrested strains credulity. The government contends that Saum, apparently believing his own boasts, called the Miami office of the Secret Service. They referred him to the FBI. There he spoke with an agent named Kevin Currier, telling him that he needed to have a certain drug dealer released from jail. Saum, the government's case contends, just happened to mention to Currier that Garcia had an illegal machine gun in his house. Currier passed the word on to Detective Diaz and ATF agent Hamburger, the very same agents who had worked to nail Garcia a week earlier. Federal prosecutors can't explain why it was that, of all the law enforcement officers in Miami, Currier decided to contact these two.

Saum, like Coutin, cooperated with the agents out to get Garcia. On the morning of August 12, Saum and Detective Diaz entered Garcia's home and removed the machine gun. (Since Saum was a houseguest, no warrant was needed.) Saum then called Garcia and told him he was going to sell the weapon for $3,000 to a friend, a pilot named "Dale." Garcia was upset that Saum had taken his gun but cheered up when Saum promised that the pilot would also take them to Honduras. "Dale" was actually Dennis Hamburger. He taped two conversations with Garcia, then told Garcia to meet him at a nearby shopping mall so he could pay for the gun. When Garcia showed up, he was arrested.

AT GARCIA'S TRIAL, Hamburger and Diaz covered up the first arrest attempt. When the prosecutor asked Diaz, "When did you become involved in the investigation [that led up to Garcia's arrest]?" Diaz answered, "August 12, 1985." That was two weeks after the episode at Coutin's house. Hamburger claimed to be only vaguely familiar with Garcia's name before he was arrested. Asked whether he "had information . . . that Mr. Garcia was a criminal" before the second arrest, Diaz answered, "No sir."

Seven people have confirmed various aspects of the first arrest attempt at Coutin's house, including Coutin and three other members of his family. Alan Saum, the government's own witness against Garcia, testified that Garcia had talked about delivering his machine gun to someone "by the name of Jose" who "owned the paramilitary store." Jose Coutin owns a gun shop.

So why did the two arresting offers deliberately cover up this episode at Garcia's trial? The probable reason is that Garcia might well have been acquitted on grounds of entrapment if it turned out that the only reason he had a machine gun in the first place was that a government informant—Coutin—had induced him to obtain it. Without the disclosure of the earlier operation, Jesus Garcia was sentenced to three years in jail.

In January Garcia went to federal law enforcement officials hoping to get his sentenced reduced. He told them everything he knew about the March 1985 arms shipment and about the alleged plot to blow up the U.S. Embassy. That's when the U.S. attorney's office in Miami launched its probe into possible illegal activities in the *contra* "private aid" network. Eleven months later Jesus Garcia sits in jail and his former colleagues are free. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

All About Sex

Items from this week's collection: *Betty Blue*, a French film, opens with a couple copulating on a bed. *Happily Ever After*, a Brazilian film, shows us a couple on their feet—on his feet, anyway—copulating against a wall. *Something Wild*, an American film, shows us a man reclining while, just out of sight, a woman performs fellatio. A busy week.

Betty Blue
(Alive Films)
Happily Ever After
(European Classics)
Something Wild
(Orion)

Betty Blue was directed by Jean-Jacques Beneix, who made the diverting *Diva* and the numbingly affected *Moon in the Gutter*. His third film ranks between the first two, neither completely realized nor disastrous. Jean-Hugues Anglade plays a young man working at odd jobs for the owner of some beach cottages and living in one of them. He and a waitress, played by Béatrice Dalle, have fallen fiercely in love. She discovers some notebooks that he has filled with writings, reads them, and declares that he is a novelist of genius. Laboriously she types the manuscript and sends a dozen or so copies to publishers.

Concurrently, this hot and moody girl throws wild tantrums on small provocation and resents so much the leering of Anglade's boss that she sets fire to Anglade's cottage. The pair flees to Paris. Through a man they meet there, they are offered work and a home in a small town: they run a piano store and live above it. Rejections of Anglade's novel flow in and depress the volatile Dalle. In one black fit, she gravely injures herself. Just afterward, good news about the novel—which we expected—arrives precisely too late. But even if the good news had arrived in time, we know that catastrophe would only have been postponed.

Beneix wrote the screenplay from a novel by Philippe Djian, unknown to me, so I can't say where the story's windings originate, but wind it certainly does. For all the mod characters and action, the story seems old-fashioned, with episodes invented sequentially rather than planned. ("Suppose now we have them run a piano store in the country?") The fact that life is often improvised is no excuse: we demand more of art than of feckless life.

Beneix employs different degrees of realism. The couple's passion is quite real; other matters are less so. How could Dalle burn down that cottage or, when she works briefly in a Paris restaurant, stab a customer's arm without consequences? The ad hoc story and the lightness with which some complications are treated don't help the base of the film. *Betty Blue*, for all the time it spends with its heroine, is the man's story. It depicts his unperceived misfortune in falling in love with a woman who gradually reveals, to him and to herself, that her wild temper is only one downward step toward irrationality, a descent that has several shocks in store for him. This might have been a film—something like *Jules and Jim*—in which a woman's psychosis finally forces a love affair out of the romantic patterns that the man tries to impose on it. Instead *Betty Blue* ends as an implicit cautionary tale: be careful about whom you fall in love with; don't mistake potential madness for madcap charm.

Anglade has a face that evokes generalization: it's one kind of French male face, lean and pointy-profiled, reminiscent of Daniel Gélin and Jean-Pierre Cassel and François Cluzet. Anglade is a competent and appealing actor. Dalle, a *jolie laide* with a large mouth that can be both sexy and childishly pathetic, is moving.

Happily Ever After is done from the leading woman's view. Written by Antonio Calmon, and very sentimental under its candor, it was directed by Bruno Barreto, who did *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands*. This new one is more journeyman work.

Regina Duarte plays a prospering São Paulo architect, around 40, with a husband and two young children. She has a dream about dancing with a blond woman and becoming homosexually interested, then discovering that the blonde is a dark-haired young man. The next day she accidentally meets the young man of her dreams. (Later she even sees the jukebox to whose music she was dancing.) Paulo Castelli plays the youth, a frank rogue who is a prostitute for both men and women; but he is handsome and engaging, and Duarte is hooked. While her husband is off on a trip, she sinks into the young man's sordid world, which includes drug dealing, because she is sexually overwhelmed by him. At last she pulls herself free and returns to her family and her former life, perhaps sadder, certainly wiser in some ways.

Despite the young man's cheerfully opportunistic morality, I was more concerned about him than about her. She is quite evidently on a little outing from her world, to which, after her fling, she will return. Castelli, however, is stuck in that lower world, uneducated, unprivileged, forced to make his way through the jungle that she merely visited. This reversal of sympathies is not exactly the film's intent, but it is helped by Duarte's lachrymose quality (she's

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Color of Money. A sequel to *The Hustler*. The script is a pale dilution of what it might have been; Paul Newman has outgrown this role; but Martin Scorsese directs with force and heat. (Reviewed 11/17/86)

Ménage. If only this unconventional frolic hadn't become logical toward the end. While it floats, Gerard Depardieu and others keep it spinning. (11/3/86)

Otello. Placido Domingo and Justino Diaz do more than console us for the abridgment of Verdi's masterpiece. (10/6/86)

Sid and Nancy. Surprises—good acting, writing, and direction—change what might have been a fans' memorial into grim chronicle. Lives and deaths of the punk rocker Sid Vicious and his girl. (10/27/86)

SK

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another Latin American Joan Crawford clone) and by Castelli's resigned yet spirited performance.

Query: Isn't anyone in Brazil worried about AIDS?

Something Wild was directed by Jonathan Demme, whose *Citizens' Band* and *Melvin and Howard* won him admirers, myself excluded. This new script, by E. Max Frye, is ridiculous. Jeff Daniels, a married, square New York businessman, is picked up on a Friday afternoon by a bizarrely dressed, sexy woman, Melanie Griffith. Offering him a lift back to his office, she tricks him into a sizzling afternoon in a New Jersey motel. He is so smitten by her that he phones his office and family to lie his way into a weekend of further adventures with her. They visit her mother in Pennsylvania; Griffith introduces Daniels as her husband. She takes him to her high school reunion, where they meet her real husband, a criminal just out of jail. The husband, whom she is trying to avoid, slithers into their company, manages to ditch Daniels, and takes Griffith off by force. Daniels doggedly follows them to Virginia and gets entangled in a plot that ends with a killing.

Some questions. How could the flashily dressed Griffith rob a liquor store and not soon be apprehended—in the same car—by highway police? How could she ram an electric sign without drawing police attention? Why didn't her mother, a sympathetic woman, tell Daniels that Griffith is married? Is Griffith a professional thief? If so, how does she get away with it? If not, how does she get her money? Why is Daniels willing to change his whole life, as eventually he does, for a woman who has so little in common with him and is plainly a bit nutty? Mismatchings happen plentifully all around us, of course, but *Something Wild* treats this pairing as a long-delayed meeting of true minds. In the first part of the film Griffith wears a sleek black wig and calls herself Lulu (not the character's real name). If the wig and the name were meant to remind us of Louise Brooks in *Pandora's Box*, the move was risky: Lulu in the film, and in the Wedekind plays from which it was adapted, is a quite different, diabolically consistent woman.

None of the questions above bothered Frye or Demme. Demme's moderately competent direction has only one fillip—a touch that accompanies the closing credits. Daniels is, as usual, pleasant but unmemorable. Griffith, in her earlier

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black-haired version, has some husky-voiced sexiness; when she reveals her blond self, she seems to lose both sex and huskiness.

Each of these three films deals with a relatively orderly person led into disorder through sexual desire and engulfing fulfillment. It's only a coincidence that I saw all three in the same week, but it seems more than a coincidence that all were made at about the same time. Civilization keeps intensifying those discontents.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

The Tragedies of Apartheid

On tour with a theater company, I missed *Woza Africa!*, the series of South African productions invited to play at Lincoln Center this fall. Having returned to Boston, I did manage to catch up with one of these presentations, perhaps the most celebrated, *Born in the RSA*. It was playing at the Strand Theatre, a palatial auditorium in poverty-stricken Dorchester, on the night the Red Sox were at Fenway taking Game Five. Maybe that's why the theater was so empty. Where were all those politically engaged students who, protesting university divestment policies, were creating shantytown theater just last spring on the grounds of their own campuses? No doubt back in the dorms with a keg of beer, watching Bruce Hurst put away the Mets.

The Strand is an ornate old house adorned with classical pilasters, Wedgwood ovals, a gilt proscenium, a sculptured circular ceiling—the kind of theater they used to build in the '30s. *Born in the RSA* brought me back to the '30s too. A product of Barney Simon's Market Theatre Company of South Africa, an interracial group that has been working together since 1974, the show revealed seven remarkable acting talents at work, all of them motivated by a profound commitment to social change. I doubt that Americans have seen such indignation on stage since the days of the Theatre Union. What local causes in recent times have ignited theatrical fires of equal intensity? Vietnam? Desegregation? Feminism? Nuclear disarmament? Our social issues may be deeply felt but they rarely inspire similarly impassioned dramatic works.

RSA stands for Republic of South Africa, which makes the title slyly ironic. Whatever the government of South Africa pretends to be these days, it can hardly be called a republic, when the vast majority of black people are being systematically stripped not only of voting rights but of the right to live and work. To be born in such a "republic," the play implies, is to inhabit one of only three possible roles: oppressor, revolutionary, or passive witness. The play further suggests that to remain neutral in the face of the unspeakable actions of the Botha regime may be the most despicable act of all.

The word "play" is probably inappropriate here. *Born in the RSA* is more like a Living Newspaper, a series of testimonials delivered directly to the audience from a bare stage furnished only with a projection screen and some headline-covered platforms. The product of the collaboration of Barney Simon and the cast of three blacks and four whites, the piece proceeds through a sequence of declarative speeches about what it's like to live out a political nightmare. One by one, the characters introduce themselves: Mia, a middle-aged Jewish lawyer defending the rights of the oppressed ("We all have one thing in common—a desperate need to change the world we live in"); Glen Donahue, a student at Witwatersrand University, recruited by security police to spy on his fellow students; Glen's wife, Nicky, whom he betrays and abandons; Susan, an art teacher "with a fetish for men over six foot one" who becomes the mistress of lanky Glen; Thenjiwe, a female trade union leader running a small activist cell; her sister, a vigorous black woman with a ten-year-old child; and Zach, an unemployed black double bass player and innocent bystander, transformed into a revolutionary in spite of himself.

The piece has a kind of story, a remorseless one, about the impact of Glen, the apolitical informer, on the lives of the other characters. A tall, weak man with Boer charm and a weakness for rawboned women, Glen advances from turning in his Marxist professor to informing on his own mistress when he finds a pamphlet in her bedroom entitled "Armed Struggle." This action, pleasing to his superiors, gives him the ultimate high. For him, informing is less a patriotic duty than a personal drug of choice. When Susan leads him directly to Thenjiwe ("the Kaffir girl we've been waiting for"), Glen has them both detained and arrested.

From this point on, much of the play focuses on prison conditions—interrogations, tortures, warder brutality including attempted rape—a catalog of indignities and injustices that inspire murderous reactions in the characters, not to mention the audience. Nicky attends Susan's trial, only to hear her husband, brought in to testify, identified as "lover Donahue." Her reaction lies somewhere between paralysis and catatonia—she leans against her kitchen stove and consumes a box of chocolate Smarties. But the ultimate crime for which the South African government is indicted here is a crime against children. The police have begun arresting black preteens, among them the son of Thenjiwe's sister, for stoning cars. They make the children lie under oath, then jail them (Glen defends this with glib asides about the American use of napalm). It is the kids who frighten the regime for it is they who will eventually bring it down ("the kids in Soweto stink, man, they stink of victory"). Thenjiwe's nephew is finally released from jail, with Mia's legal help, but not before he has been buggered and brutally beaten. Mia turns on Glen: "All I can see is a nice Kentucky necklace—a huge burning tire around your neck." Susan, spitting in his face, tells him he's not worth the match.

The final scene features Zach, the musician, observing white children at play—a group of little girls in crisp uniforms cavorting in a playground. "Do you know who is watching you?" he asks. "Be careful. They told you to be frightened of me. They were right. Beware of your black nannies too." He moves to the center of the playground and begins cracking skulls with a baseball bat. "I splintered arms and legs and spines. . . . I was everything they wanted me to be." But it is a fantasy. The bell rings to call the children into class and Zach, watching them depart, hears himself yelling: "Fuck you for what you're doing to our children and fuck you for

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what you're doing to me." The play ends with the cast singing a half-ecstatic, half-threatening revolutionary song.

The small engaged audience with whom I sat gave the cast numerous curtain calls and a standing ovation. There was no denying the incendiary power of the evening or the accomplishments of the actors. This, with a vengeance, is what Eric Bentley once called "Theatre of Commitment," and it shows us something we haven't seen demonstrated in a long while: how commonly held belief in a cause can fuse individual actors into a close collective. Each performer has gifts of a very high order, along with the capacity to tell a well-rehearsed story as if for the first time, and each is joined in something larger that makes the parts inseparable from the whole. To preserve this collective identity, the actors are not identified by roles in the program. I think it only proper to cite them together without singling any out for individual praise: Vanessa Cooke, Timmy Kwebulana, Neil McCarthy, Gcina Mhlophe, Fiona Ramsay, Thoko Ntshinga, Terry Norton.

YET I MUST confess that I did not join the standing ovation and that I left the theater feeling—despite my admiration for the performers—vaguely manipulated. It is a problem I usually have with the Theatre of Commitment, no matter how estimable the cause—I recoil from its aura of exclusiveness, its odor of sanctity, its easy flow of self-righteous indignation. It is a paradox that anything that tries to unite people runs the risk of also dividing them. Performed in a police state like South Africa, I can imagine *Born in the RSA* being received as an act of extraordinary courage as well as a strong insurrectionary instrument—preparation for the uprising that will eventually come. Performed here, in the United States, it seems to be asking its audiences either to endorse violence or be condemned as inglorious sponges, mute and impassive in the face of evil.

I'm reluctant to accept such a narrow choice of roles, either in life or in the theater. Also, I share Ivan Karamazov's conviction that there is no greater evil—no greater argument for the absence of God—than inflicting pain on innocent children. The treatment of black children by South African police makes us hate the Botha government. But to retaliate against white children, even in fantasy as Zach does, is to become indistinguishable from the other side. *Born in the RSA*

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builds a strong case for revenge, for outrage, for bloody reprisals. It assumes that those who favor apartheid or work on behalf of the regime are totally without redeeming features. It suggests that those who do not join the resistance, and even those who leave the country, are somehow identified with the oppressors. These assumptions may be necessary to a revolution, since like all wars, revolutions are built on the patterns of melodrama, on conflicts between the forces of good and evil. But they subvert the very function of art, which is committed to a deeper understanding of the human experience. By accumulating injustices and stimulating resentment, *Born in the RSA* serves its activist cause well. But it sacrifices the varieties of art and the complexities of life to the obligatory simplicities of well-intentioned propaganda. Among the manifold tragedies of apartheid, indeed of any totalitarian system, is the way it tends to turn people of goodwill into victims of restricted vision, torn between guilt and rage.

PROFESSIONALISM GONE MAD

The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide by Robert Jay Lifton

(Basic Books, 561 pp., $19.95)

The title of Robert Jay Lifton's book may call to mind the sinister medical experiments performed on prisoners in the concentration camps. But the subject is far wider. The Nazis assigned a pivotal role to medicine in their plans for genetic and racial purification. National Socialism, Rudolph Hess said in 1934, was "nothing but applied biology." And in practice, when the Nazis decided on the mass murder first of the mentally and physically defective and later of the Jews, they gave doctors responsibility for much of the planning and management of death. Physicians were so deeply involved in the killing at Auschwitz that the death camp, according to Lifton, had the aura of a medical enterprise.

How physicians could be transformed from healers into killers—while maintaining their professional identity—is the conundrum at the center of Lifton's inquiry. And yet the preoccupations of the book are not fundamentally those of individual psychology. *The Nazi Doctors* is an effort to understand the Holocaust from the inside out: to work from the mind of the executioner to the structures of collective psychology and social institutions. Lifton wants to know why the Nazis tried to kill every Jew to the last baby, and why those asked to take part were willing—and psychologically able—to do it. And while keeping in mind that this was a unique human catastrophe, Lifton tries to find in it general principles about the mechanisms of mind and society that make genocide possible.

A psychiatrist now teaching at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York after many years at Yale, Lifton brings to this work a long career of psychological research into the experiences of war, of confrontation with death, and of survival in the 20th century. Among his earlier books are studies of the survivors of Hiroshima and of the veterans of the Vietnam War. The latter volume, *Home from the War*, was marred, I thought, by softheaded generalizations based on Lifton's work with an unrepresentative group of troubled anti-war veterans. This new book, however, is of a very different quality. It commands attention as a work of impressive scholarship and serious theoretical and moral purpose.

Unlike some other studies in psychohistory, *The Nazi Doctors* is based on significant contact with its subjects. Beginning in 1978, Lifton conducted interviews with 29 men who had been prominently involved in Nazi medicine; another 12 non-medical former Nazis; and 80 former prisoners, more than half of them physicians, who had worked on the medical blocks at Auschwitz. These conversations, woven into material from the historical record on the Holocaust, often give more than one perspective on the same event or personality, an important check in matters where individual memory may be especially prone to errors and self-serving distortions. To the impatient reader, Lifton may seem at times to be hovering and circling back over the same questions. Yet I never felt this to be a serious problem. The dignity of the subject demands painstaking care, which may be one reason why books and films about the Holocaust are generally not for people in a hurry.

In the first of the book's three parts, Lifton traces the sequence of Nazi efforts at genetic purification—the elimination of "life unworthy of life"—from the forced sterilization of the defective through the killing first of impaired children, then of impaired adults, and finally of concentration camp inmates. The killing of the impaired was misleadingly termed "euthanasia"; as a secret, organized project of mass extermination by the state, it had nothing in common with the idea of an uncoerced individual choice by the terminally ill. These murders were thoroughly medicalized. They were rationalized as a form of therapy for the *Volk* through the elimination of its diseased members, and they were performed under medical auspices on instructions from medical authorities. At state hospitals converted into killing centers, physicians personally administered lethal injections. It was also in the "euthanasia" centers that the techniques for gassing victims were first introduced. To this perversion of their calling, physicians offered no significant resistance. When the murder of the ill and impaired finally stopped after perhaps 100,000 were slaughtered, the key factor was the opposition from ordinary Germans, led by churchmen.

Indeed, the medical profession was so successfully Nazified that it never presented an obstacle to the appropriation of medicine for political purposes. A higher proportion of doctors joined the party than did members of any other profession. Many clearly welcomed the lessening of competition, as their Jewish colleagues were removed from their posts and prohibited from practice. "Scientific racism" and eugenics had gained wide currency in German medicine, and the Nazi devotion to "racial hygiene" promised medicine a position of high importance in the new order. Moreover, subservience to the state, common enough among Germans, was particularly ingrained among the psychiatrists

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who worked in state institutions and who assumed the leading roles in the "euthanasia" killing.

Lifton's approach in Part One is historical: to show how medicalized killing unfolded step by step. In Part Two, the core of the book, he takes Auschwitz as a case study and his approach is functional: to show how it worked psychologically and as a social institution. Lifton's chief subjects here are the doctors of the SS, who selected which prisoners would die, supervised the gassing, declared the victims dead, sometimes administered lethal phenol injections, and conducted experiments on select groups. How they managed their role in "selections," how they steeled themselves to their task and overcame whatever doubts or internal conflicts they experienced, how they were able to turn killing into a medical routine in what Lifton calls the "healing-killing reversal"—these are the psychological processes that absorb his attention.

Lifton's theory is that the Nazi physicians engaged in a kind of "doubling" that allowed them to separate off an Auschwitz self from their prewar selves. Rather than submerging their conscience altogether, they expressed it in the terms set by Nazi ideology. They saw their role in selections as an ordeal that their higher, Nazi values of biological revitalization required them to endure. Of course, much of the language and procedure of the death camp can be interpreted as easing that ordeal—blocking the reality of murder by distancing the doctors from their victims. But while facilitated by these devices, the physicians' participation in the organization of death seems ultimately to have been sustained by the intoxicant of ideology. For having accepted the premise that Jews were the world's "fundamental evil," they were susceptible to persuasion that no response would ultimately work, short of the Final Solution they had been instructed to carry out. Killing Jews would heal the Nordic race. They could direct the murder and still be doctors.

IN REPRODUCING THE thought of the Nazi doctors, Lifton offers us a study in the diseases of professional rationality. The selection for the gas chambers of prisoners disembarking from the trains could be justified as protection against overcrowding and epidemic disease in the camps. Similarly, the killing of prisoners infected with typhus could be justified as a public health measure.

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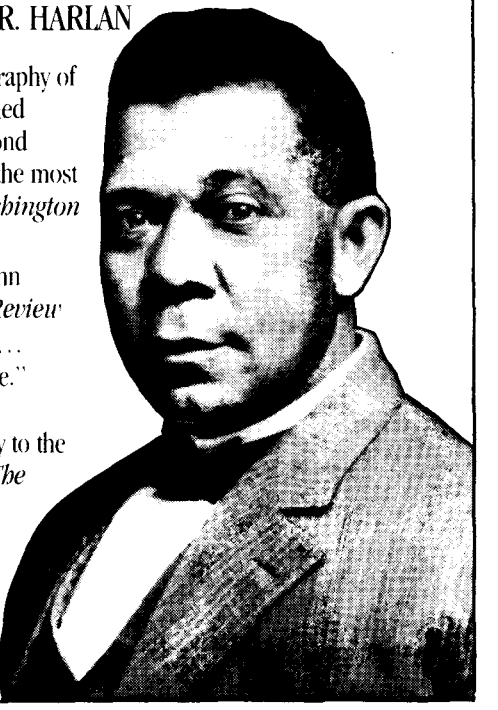

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The gas chambers themselves could be justified as providing a "humane" death. Were there difficulties burning bodies fast enough? The Nazi doctors helped to solve the problem. It was in this "problem-solving" framework of technical rationality that the euphemism "Final Solution" could make psychological sense.

If the thought of the SS physicians shows us a grotesque parody of reason, the thought of the prisoner doctors, most of them Jews, shows us a picture of reason in extremity. The prisoner doctors—the subject of three of the best chapters in the book—did most of the medical work at Auschwitz but were often called upon to assist in selections of patients judged too sick to recover, or to recover quickly enough. Some cooperated so thoroughly as to be judged collaborators. Others held their ground as best they could in a situation where none could escape with entirely clean hands.

At the end of his study of Auschwitz, Lifton gives us three case studies of Nazi doctors—the notorious Josef Mengele, and two others in whom he finds some elements of "decency," Eduard Wirths, the chief physician at Auschwitz, and Ernst B., a surviving SS doctor who refused to take part in selections and whom Lifton was able to interview. These chapters raise most acutely questions that may bother some readers about the entire book. To understand the Nazi doctors does not, of course, require that we be "understanding" of them. Nonetheless, inquiring into their adaptation to Auschwitz creates an impression, even if unintended by Lifton, of sympathy for the difficulties they experienced. Not that Lifton is too "soft" on his subjects, or that his judgment is biased by reliance on the testimony of survivors grateful to particular Nazi doctors for their lives. (One reviewer of this book has even complained that Lifton, after all, could not interview the dead.) Lifton seems fully conscious of the danger of becoming too close to his subjects, and his judgment is, I think, uncompromised by the interviews. But readers may be disturbed by his attempt to view these men in other than black-and-white terms. The demands of psychological inquiry require more complexity and a different balancing of detail than would a moral verdict, for which it suffices to say that these doctors willingly participated in mass extermination. Moments of decency—the saving of a few from the killing—scarcely offset their contribution to genocide. But Lifton is right not to stop there; we need to understand how they managed to do what seems unimaginable to us.

THE THIRD AND final part of the book is Lifton's theoretical reprise: here he brings together his arguments about "doubling" and the psychology of genocide. Physicians, he suggests, are particularly vulnerable to being used for genocidal purposes. "The doctor's danger," he writes, "lies in his capacity to double in a way that brings special power to his killing self even as he continues to anoint himself with medical purity."

But this capacity is hardly unique: the self-anointed come in all guises. The Nazis' choice of physicians for the role of executioner seems sufficiently explained by Nazi ideology. They saw their program as biomedical engineering; doctors were logical agents. Perhaps also, at a subconscious level, the Nazis may have been merging the performance of "white" and "black" magic. Physicians' presence at death when death is unavoidable may seem to make them appropriate figures to officiate over death when it is intentional. And doctors were no doubt convenient for the deception of prisoners arriving in the trains. For just as many Jews could not believe that a civilized nation such as Germany would murder them en masse, so they could not believe that members of a civilized profession

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such as medicine could supervise killing.

But should we expect from this one immense calamity that physicians will be instruments of genocide in other circumstances? That is where Lifton's argument becomes less persuasive. Other professionals are just as capable of being seduced by political ideologies that call them to perform heinous acts for higher causes. And even if not seduced, some professionals will apply themselves to technical tasks without taking any responsibility for the ultimate ends of the work; yet their participation may lend that work legitimacy. If the medical sciences have dark pages in their history, so have the physical sciences. In the modern world, the authority of science and the profession is a resource available for monstrous as well as good purposes. We simply have no guarantees, least of all from the psychology of professionalism, that other professionals acting in the name of higher values won't also "double" as killers.

What Lifton gives us is an account of how ordinary men of the professions can perform extraordinary evil without taking off their white coats. The Nazi doctors were able to send millions to their deaths, not because they were demonic or amoral or because evil is simply banal, but because of the grotesque transformations of reason and moral values produced by Nazi ideology and the Nazi state. We may never understand why the Holocaust happened, but Lifton has helped us to understand how it worked—at least, how it worked psychologically for the executioners. It is dismal testimony to the adaptive capacities of the human mind that so many of these Nazi doctors could orchestrate mass extermination, keep their sanity, and return to medical practice after the war. None of the Nazi doctors Lifton interviewed showed any remorse.

PAUL STARR

Paul Starr is professor of sociology at Princeton University and the author of *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (Basic Books).

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BACK TO THE FUTURE

A Summons to Memphis
by Peter Taylor

(Knopf, 209 pp., $15.95)

Peter Taylor is routinely and rightly praised for the glasslike lucidity of his prose, yet he is interested above all in distortions of perspective. For more than 40 years, he has written about well-born families in the upper South who have lost much of their assurance about what to look up to and whom to look down on. His Tennessee, as Robert Penn Warren wrote in 1948 in his introduction to Taylor's first collection of stories, *A Long Fourth*, "is a world vastly uncertain of itself and the ground of its values, caught in a tangle of modern commercialism and traditions and conventions gone to seed, confused among pieties and pretensions." That world was still a contemporary one then. It no longer is—the old rules of order between the generations, the sexes, and the races are history. Yet they are important history, and Taylor has continued to scrutinize the place and epoch of their passing in fiction that seems old-fashioned—at least on the surface.

Taylor's new novel (his second, if you count the short *A Woman of Means*) looks like another contribution to that absorbing enterprise. In a sense it is. *A Summons to Memphis* is largely a gathering of Phillip Carver's memories of growing up happily in Nashville and then unhappily in Memphis in the 1930s and '40s. But Phillip's "very irregular notebooks," which he writes in New York miles and years away from his family past, are also an occasion for Taylor to explore an even more uncertain world than that densely textured South. Scribbling in a gloomy Manhattan apartment in the 1970s, Phillip is suffering from a very contemporary anomie. With his deracinated narrator, Taylor has brought to the surface the psychological theme that has always been at the heart of his social portraiture: how resilient, or else resistant, human

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character can be in the face of disorder and change.

It is a familiar Southern preoccupation, but Taylor's "under-style," as Warren termed it, and his quiet emphasis on the mysteries of character (he's often compared to Chekhov) set him apart from the gothic regionalism of much Southern writing. He is neither pious about the past nor much impressed by the present, and his ruminations about human motives and actions have always had a deliberately inconclusive quality. Above all, they have never been simple. Certainly they aren't in *A Summons to Memphis,* which might best be described as a dramatic monologue—a virtuosic example of the often disconcerting genre. Taylor lets Phillip do all the talking, but that doesn't mean he trusts Phillip's account of self-discovery or intends us to. Phillip may well rate as Taylor's least reliable narrator, and this book demands—and rewards—vigilance. Phillip's reckoning with his own history, Taylor ironically implies throughout his character's monologue, is hollower than it appears. This dispassionate narrator is strangely bloodless, and in the end he has lost his bearings.

A SUMMONS TO MEMPHIS has the outline of a familiar Taylor story: a man is unexpectedly jolted into a confrontation with an oppressive, puzzling past and then has a brief revelation—Taylor's characteristically inconclusive kind of epiphany. A reclusive New York editor and rare-book collector of middle age, Phillip Carver receives calls one evening from his older spinster sisters in Memphis, who announce that their aging father, recently widowed, plans to remarry, and that they want Phillip to help them stop him. Phillip is prompted to dip back into his past to explain the family resentments that motivate Betsy and Josephine and to examine his own feelings. He unearths memories of a father who was shamefully domineering but also admirably adaptable in a way Phillip himself will never be, and he manages to forgive him. While his sisters sabotage the remarriage (and also their father's reconciliation with the best friend who once betrayed him), Phillip stands aside.

Yet the way Phillip tells the story lends support to an implicit, and considerably darker, version. The prose is as limpid as ever ("like a glass-bottom boat," said Randall Jarrell), but Phillip's method is digressive in the extreme: he veers unpredictably between past and present, circles around obviously important memories, repeats himself again and again. His long-winded, hairsplitting manner results in some quite comical passages—to Taylor's obvious delight. But Phillip's own detachment is strangely awkward, not witty. Despite all the minute observations he offers, he is emotionally impassive as he pauses to describe the woman with whom he has lived for years or his best friend from Memphis days, or surveys his family—or assesses himself: "I think I felt totally indifferent," says this man from whom sentiments flee. Each page seems to hold out the promise that Phillip is about to frame a memory in a way that might free him from his aloofness. Yet the happy ending that Taylor stages in the last, frigidly lyrical paragraph of these notebooks is heavily ironic—as his apparently comic conclusions so often are. This narrator is numbly suspended between the past and the future, between the power to will and the power to feel.

THROUGHOUT PHILLIP'S monologue, Taylor nudges us toward this deeper reading: here is a man whose ostensible resilience is finally only a sign of abiding passivity. For such an evasive soul, Taylor suggests, a confrontation with his family past can do little to instill, or strengthen, a sense of generous self-possession. Instead it becomes an occasion to avoid responsibility for having become the remote person he is. The convoluted tour Phillip makes of his youthful ordeals reveals a vulnerable man bent on blaming others for his own self-centered vulnerability. He starts out by claiming that the source of his sisters' (and his own) resentment against their father lies in the move George Carver forced on the family some 40 years earlier, in 1931. Betrayed in Nashville by his best friend and principal legal client, Lewis Shackleford, George Carver picked up and established a new and successful career in the more commercial, less custom-bound city of Memphis. But for his wife and children, according to Phillip, the uprooting was a disaster George selfishly ignored. Phillip's mother lapsed into "thirty years of real or imagined invalidism," his sisters started down the road of brittle spinsterhood, and 13-year-old Phillip suffered "a trauma he would in some way never recover from."

Phillip himself half-admits that it sounds preposterous to assign such importance to the shift between the two

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cities, "with their almost imperceptible difference—laughably alike they would seem to an outsider." What he doesn't seem fully to appreciate is that he has undermined his own credibility, which casts his succeeding accusations in a more questionable light. Is this narrator either the former helpless victim or the current clear-eyed judge he makes himself out to be? The actual disaster, he eventually claims, was that the imperious George Carver meddled in his children's romantic lives, denying them independence when they needed it most. He openly rejected Betsy's suitor and Josephine's beaux, and the once beautiful girls turned into eccentric characters. With Phillip he was sneakier but no less assertive: behind his son's back George Carver saw to it that Phillip's sweetheart was dispatched to South America. Phillip in turn secretly absconded to New York, where he claims he's been enjoying placid independence ever since with a woman whose greatest virtue is apparently her detachment.

PHILLIP HAS sketched a grim caricature of the provincial past that often looms in Taylor's stories. The changing local Tennessee customs that unbalance so many of his characters seem to have disoriented Phillip in a radical—almost surreal—way. For him, the familiar overbearing power of family traditions and expectations has turned tyrannical. Not that he's presented it so starkly. Shifting constantly among scenes and times, Phillip makes a show of groping for a clearer perspective on a past he's brooded over but never before brought to the surface—yet he's more successful in raising further questions about his own failures to act and react.

Toward the end of his notebooks, Phillip is given what appears to be the reprieve Taylor sometimes offers his protagonists: the chance to put his past, if only provisionally, in more realistic proportion. Yet Taylor implies that Phillip may be as misled about his mature liberation as he was about his youthful enslavement. His supposed act of imaginative sympathy with forceful George Carver serves in the end as another way for Phillip to assuage his uneasiness about his own wan existence—to convince himself that from now on he is choosing it freely. Taylor grants him a few moments of empathy: there is a vivid scene in which Phillip is swept up and out of himself by the old man as the two ride in a car to the wedding his sisters have secretly canceled.

But by the close of the book, Phillip has drifted into dry speculations instead. Sitting in his Manhattan apartment with Holly Kaplan, the woman with whom he's lived peacefully and passionlessly for years, he sips a watery drink and talks endlessly about principles of family reconciliation—about forgiving versus forgetting—rather than about real people. He says he can now see and admire his father as an energetically adaptable man, completely different from himself: "It was his very oppositeness from me that I could admire without reservation, like a character in a book." Contemplating an unchanged, utterly quiet life ahead, he announces in his last line that he and Holly have emerged "serenely free spirits."

Yet "serenity" and "orderliness" and "reasonableness," the supreme values in Phillip's limited existence, are hardly Taylor's high standards. Conceiving of the past as the realm of determinism, Phillip seizes upon the future as the province of choice—and is left with no true human choices to make. The static, unencumbered fate that Phillip and his companion look forward to with self-satisfaction is sterile—a vision of the weightless contemporary world eerier than any Taylor has presented before. Shut up in his dim apartment with Holly, surrounded by manuscripts rather than children, Phillip may see his notebooks as evidence of the birth of understanding, but in fact they are the testimony of a disoriented soul.

"PETER TAYLOR has a disenchanted mind," Robert Penn Warren wrote 40 years ago, "but a mind that nevertheless understands and values enchantment"—"the enchantment of veracity," he hastened to say, not of fantasy. The trauma of maturity, Taylor's fiction has always proposed, involves more than seeing through the oppressive pieties and pretensions of the past. But he has rarely so starkly dramatized the real, and more daunting, challenge: to find some humane way of living with precisely the terrifying truth that those family and social customs are meant to camouflage—the chasms between selves. Some of his characters are lucky enough to "see the world through another man's eyes," as the narrator of the story "The Promise of Rain" puts it, and thus have a chance of truly seeing into their own heads, and above all their own hearts: "It is only then that the world, as you have seen it through your

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own eyes, will begin to tell you things about yourself." For the less fortunate in Taylor's fiction, the price of myopia is high. Some turn into tyrants at home. Some become victims out in the world. In *A Summons to Memphis* Taylor has suggested an even more alienating possibility in Phillip, who has no real home and rarely ventures into the world: the danger of turning into a "free spirit" trapped within the bounds of the self.

ANN HULBERT

LIFE OF THE PARTIES

The Outside Story: How Democrats and Republicans Re-elected Reagan by Richard Brookhiser

(Doubleday, 298 pp., $17.95)

Right Turn: The Decline of the Democrats and the Future of American Politics by Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers

(Hill and Wang, 276 pp., $19.95)

Richard Brookhiser's *The Outside Story* promises something fresh. Presumably Brookhiser, managing editor of *National Review*, will serve us up more than tired establishment opinion. As the title declares, this will be no inside story of campaign intrigue and public relations ploys. The outer story of "appearances, pronouncements, rituals . . . things that could have been seen or heard or read by any American . . . gives the best explanation of why Ronald Reagan was re-elected, and why the Democrats lost." For Brookhiser, the deepest meaning of the election is right on the surface of things, for politics is first and foremost about talk. "A man's arguments," he quotes Chesterton, "show what he is up to." In the beginning, and the end, is the word.

This formulation may be too earnest. After all, the meaning of political language is not always clear. Candidates may talk out of both sides of their mouths, they may be tongue-tied, they may speak double-talk. Still, public talk is a topic much neglected—by model-builders who search out the effect of, say, each digit rise in unemployment on votes for incumbents; by cynical public relations types who think of talk as calculated entrancement; by survey analysts for whom the constrained talk of the questionnaire is so much less elusive than natural talk. Despite the hazards, then, there is much of interest here.

What the outside story means practically is that Brookhiser tells us what he saw and heard on the campaign trail. He reports on the Republican campaign and convention, but the real energy of the book, and the most spirited writing, is found in its coverage of the Democratic primaries and convention. Brookhiser traipsed around Iowa with Askew and Cranston, traveled with Jesse Jackson to Harlem and to Cuba, and watched the people in the funny hats at the Democratic National Convention in San Francisco.

Brookhiser has his occasional lapses. At times he strains for cleverness, and so becomes too clever by half. Mondale, he says, represents "the terminal moraine of liberalism." And is having Imaru Baraka introduce Jesse Jackson to a Harlem crowd really "like letting Céline introduce a Reagan rally"? Actually, the best one-liners are not Brookhiser's. He quotes Murray Kempton's description of the furious bidding for Jewish support during the New York primary: "Jackson may have called New York Hymietown; Hart and Mondale treated it as if it were." And Newt Gingrich's shrewd recognition of Jack Kemp's unsurpassable populist credentials: "Jack showered with guys that most Republicans never meet." Still, what emerges most sharply from the vignettes is a sense of the Democrats' "special interest" problem at its most surreal.

The enemies of liberalism have surely exaggerated this problem, but for some time now the Democrats have been turning their party into a little Balkan state. They have too many factions, fair enough. But the problem is the way they go about reconciling them: with a procedural mania for categorical representation. Brookhiser portrays Mondale's search for a running mate as one of the high-camp moments of claimant-group liberalism. The process, he notes, with its "strained ecumenicism" of three women, two blacks, a Hispanic, and Lloyd Bentsen (affirmative action for white Southern males?), "stopped seeming rigorous and began to look absurd." He observes that the parade of potential candidates looked like "a James Watt joke," or perhaps a "running-mate 'Gong Show.'" Meanwhile NOW threatened to nominate a woman from the floor of the convention "if Mondale was so insensitive as to pick a man."

Jesse Jackson also played the ransom game, and played it well, managing not only to extract that coveted place on the convention dais, but also to head off a condemnation of anti-Semitism. The interesting thing is not that Jackson made the threats, but that they worked. Brookhiser shrewdly suggests that Mondale's demonic inflation of Jerry Falwell was compensation for his pusillanimity over Louis Farrakhan. But Mondale was hardly alone, and in this respect the Jackson tour was interesting for what it revealed about enduring white paternalism toward blacks. As Julius Lester has observed:

> The media allowed Jackson to survive his "Hymie/Hymietown" gaffe and his association with Minister Farrakhan. Mondale and Hart would not have survived making references to "nigger" or "niggertown," or associations with reactionary white extremists, if for no other reason than that blacks would have gone to war!

Like others who have worked in the American tradition of preacher-confidence man, Jackson is an agile character who has twisted himself into a medium for projected hopes of the most varied sorts. But underneath all the self-promotion, Brookhiser discerns the specter of black third force politics from another time. How else to explain the whole bizarre Farrakhan episode, if not as a death wish to sabotage relations between the Democrats' two most loyal

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and progressive constituencies? Was there not in Jackson's insistence that he would redeem the sinner a hint of the psychic games that disrupted relations between the races during the 1960s, with Jackson's refusal to disavow a brother showing his proud resolve not to yield to whites? "I'm a Third World person," declared Jackson, and Brookhiser understands the primacy of that persona. Jackson's campaign stop in Havana (not Miami or Union City) dramatized all of the moral confusion of Rainbow politics. "Long live Cuba," Jackson preached. "Long live the United States. Long live President Fidel Castro. Long live Martin Luther King. Long live Martin Luther King! Long live Ché Guevara. Long live Patrice Lumumba. Long live the cry of freedom. Our time has come [repeated three times]. Bless you." In return, Jackson got his p.r. bonanza of political prisoners from the dictator. "Castro," says Brookhiser, "as he has done before with honored or at least impressionable guests dipped into his capacious jails and doled out wretches like party favors."

BROOKHISER provides interesting portraits of the Democrats' other celebrities. He especially evokes, perhaps unintentionally, the intellectual seriousness and dignity of Mario Cuomo, whom he credits, along with Bishop O'Connor, Mondale, and Reagan, with debating the abortion issue "at a level of theoretical complexity which politics seldom reaches." Here, his taking of talk at face value allows him to understand what all the dismissive liberal jeremiads about the New Right and the abortion issue have not: more than symptoms of Luddite anguish, these plaints express genuine moral concern.

Cuomo may have been less on target in his much heralded convention speech. A striking feature of the performance was its summoning of rococo emotions. This has been characteristic of a certain kind of progressive speech for some time. One thinks of Teddy Kennedy's shrillness a few years ago, as if bombast might work on the public where moral appeal and argument had not. Cuomo's manner of engaging the president directly was to challenge him to a war of metaphors: "There is despair, Mr. President, in the places that you don't visit in your shining city. . . . The nation is more a tale of two cities than it is just a shining city on a hill." But even in the midst of the 1982 recession the Dickensian appraisal would have strained credulity. The gulf between the empirical reality it sought to overwhelm and the lost fictive world it sought to conjure was simply too great.

Most Americans don't live in either of those cities; they live somewhere in between, in "middle" America. All the effort to convert 1984 into 1932 thus confessed the mustiness of liberal thinking, its lack of anything to say to the middle classes, its dependence not on basic appeal but on the happenstance of economic emergency. "In this Manichaean America," observes Brookhiser wisely,

> there was a middle class, but Cuomo could not dwell on it, for then his implicit image of Reagan sipping champagne on the Pacific Palisades while the rest of the nation toiled in sweatshops would be weakened. So he proceeded to enumerate the party's constituents. . . . It was a list more or less composed of the friends of Walter Mondale. It was for them that the rhetorical engines of misery were stoked.

"THE FRIENDS of Walter Mondale" is the key refrain in *The Outside Story*, and it sustains the book's larger thesis. The point is made through an oblique form of assertion that wells up out of the force of all the sardonic jabs at silly liberals. According to Brookhiser, 1980 was an ideological victory for the right, the approach to realignment if not realignment itself (he coyly hedges). Unable to accept their mortality, liberals speciously chalked the loss up to Reagan's personality: "Ronald Reagan was no more personable in 1980 than he had been in 1976 or 1968—or 1964. He had not won then; why now? . . . Since Ronald Reagan hadn't changed for 30 years, there was at least a prima facie case that the country had." In 1984, rejecting Hart's hollow invocation of new ideas and bypassing the center-right of the party—Hollins, Askew, and Glenn, who promised the same pallid interest-group liberalism but less of it—they opted for a paleoliberalism that refused to apologize. Mondale was the perfect totem for this ancestral worship; he began his career "when 20th-century liberalism was in full, confident flood" and watched it implode, no longer able to excite the imagination of the nation.

Holding constant Reagan's amiability is a shade disingenuous. For one thing, the Ronald Reagan of the 1980s had changed in strategically critical ways: he talked, quite decorously, of containing the excesses of the 1960s, not of rolling back the New Deal; he invoked Roose-

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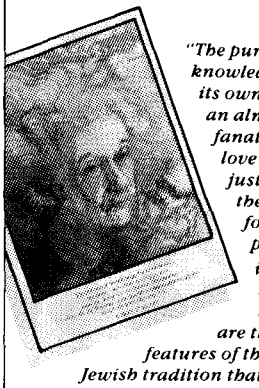

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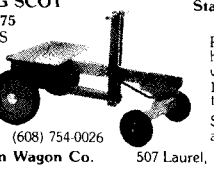

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velt recurrently, and made concessions to a variety of constituencies, from Social Security pensioners to a financial establishment nervous about voodoo economics. And even if he hadn't changed, one can think of factors less nebulous than "the people changed," such as the hostage crisis in Tehran and a disastrous economy in 1979-80 that became a bullish economy in 1983-84. The Reagan revolution was significantly a top-down affair, exploiting vague popular discontents, the persuasive and administrative resources of the executive office, the disarray of the Democrats, and, most critically for the future, conservative judicial activism and the new fiscal constraints of a Reagan-induced deficit. Reagan did not need a mandate to transform the political environment.

IT IS precisely the shakiness of various electoral realignment arguments that is highlighted by Thomas Ferguson, a professor of political science at the University of Texas, and Joel Rogers, a political scientist at Rutgers University, in *Right Turn*. Such theories of New Deal decline, they argue, are not only wrongheaded; they justify mean-spirited social policies.

Ferguson and Rogers betray a less sublime view of talk than Brookhiser. It is not that talk doesn't matter. But outside stories provide no criteria for distinguishing idle chatter from truly effective communication. Some people talk louder than others; money speaks loudest yet, like the millions that industrialists have poured into conservative foundations. Nor, one might add, do outside stories separate public talk from the private talks the Trilateral Commission and the Business Roundtable have with candidates. Robert Kuttner, in THE NEW REPUBLIC, told how right before the 1984 election Mondale's financial backers, many of them members of the Democratic Business Council, rapped him on his knuckles when he heated up his populist rhetoric. "Fritz," one of them said, "quit knocking the rich; they're financing your campaign." Mondale is said to have replied, "Oh my goodness, I'm so sorry. There's nothing wrong with wanting to be rich. I want to be rich." Some people have to eat their words.

The crucial questions in *Right Turn* are about what was prevented from being said, and about who did the preventing. According to the authors, what was not said in recent elections was something progressive. And well it might have been. As Ferguson and Rogers read the opinion surveys, there has been no popular tilt to the right, no rejection of basic New Deal principles, no fundamental partisan realignment. *Right Turn* intends a sharp rejoinder to all those neoliberal trimmers and neoconservative wreckers whose high-flown talk about rethinking liberalism really means, in their view, toadying up to the rich and trashing the poor.

THIS READING of opinion reframes Reaganism as an electoral anomaly: How can it be that public policy has lurched to the right but popular opinion has not? The answer *Right Turn* offers is that the voters' wishes do not evoke from government the policies they cherish. To understand elections, look not on the demand side but on the supply side, to the shadowy business forces that are the prime movers in politics. A realignment has indeed taken place—but among the industrial, commercial, and financial elites that mold popular debate, select candidates, and shape our public policy. What follows from this uncommonly single-minded Marxism is a chronicle of the feuds and bonds that have divided and united various industrial sectors, business firms, and personal fortunes.

The New Deal was not, in their revisionist history, an alliance of forgotten people, "but something else—a new power bloc of capital intensive industries, investment banks, and internationally oriented commercial banks." Sparing Roosevelt the choice between socialism and the termination of the constitutional regime, this bloc offered the "needed business support" for liberalism at home and internationalism abroad. John Kennedy's promise to get America moving revved up this alliance with internationalist business. Meanwhile the Republican Party fortified its role as the vehicle of protectionist firms that suffered from liberal monetary and trade policy and manufacturers whose labor intensiveness made them fierce opponents of a welfare state they could ill afford.

The plot now begins to thicken. In a cool act of infanticide, hard-boiled Trilateralists killed off the New Deal they had sired. All the brouhaha over those McGovernite nuts and gay activist zealots and third force blacks—or in another version, the unions—is thus misplaced. Ferguson and Rogers insist that labor, blacks, and women have never dominated the party. More powerful interests have. The Democratic Party was run into the ground by the same Trilateralist types who dominated Democratic Cabinets and advisory committees from Kennedy through Mondale. The crucial years of liberal collapse are not the 1960s but the mid-1970s, when "American politics made its decisive turn to the right." A variety of factors, rooted in the changing structure of the international political economy—the 1973-75 recession, the integration of America into the world economy, declining competitiveness and productivity, the OPEC-led rise in oil prices, the burden of regulations on industrial sectors of the economy—spread doubts about the New Deal through the citadels of multinational liberalism and pushed corporate liberals to the right on taxes, defense, the environment, and labor.

The tempo of New Deal collapse picked up in the late 1970s. After the fall of the Shah of Iran, business pressed for enhanced American capacity for direct intervention, and the military buildup put the squeeze on social spending. The Democratic investment bankers who forced Carter—Trilateral Commission front man, as *Right Turn* would have it, and last hurrah of the New Deal—to bring on a recession before the election ensured his loss. Meanwhile Reagan was building an accommodation with multinational business, and all the motley sectors of the business community coalesced behind a single candidate. Without the blessings of Wall Street, the big banks, and multinational business, Reaganism would have remained a quixotic movement of Sun Belt buckaneers and the archaic right.

THE DEMOCRATS (the plot continues to thicken) adapted to this new climate with slavish imitation. Throughout 1981 and 1982, all the handwringing about recapturing the middle disguised the Democrats' attempt to repudiate the New Deal. But don't think this was simply because some Democrats wanted to get on the right side of history. Once again, the monied interests were at work. This time they had penetrated the very core of the party. In the early 1980s, DNC chair Charles Manatt, a banker-lawyer, formalized the party's strategy of reaching out to business by creating a caucus of millionaires and corporate executives (the Democratic Business Council) who pushed the party in a pro-business direction from within. Chase Manhattan

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and the Bank of America floated the party's loans, which were guaranteed by prominent business types, and the party's financial structure began to look like that of a debt-ridden Third World nation run by international bankers.

Finally, as the 1984 campaign swung into high gear, Mondale's friends and financiers—Irving Shapiro of Dupont and the Business Roundtable, Roger Altman of Lehman Brothers, Robert Rubin of Goldman Sachs, investment banker Herbert Allen, Michael Blumenthal of Burroughs, and C. Peter McCullough of Xerox—began the task of "educating" the candidate. Ferguson and Rogers conclude that the Democrats could mobilize the underprivileged, but "they do not want to because . . . elite Democrats . . . while they would like to defeat the Republicans . . . are not about to subsidize a broad popular coalition inimical to their own economic interests." Perversely enough, Ferguson and Rogers agree with Brookhiser on this much: the friends of Walter Mondale did destroy the Democrats.

This version of New Deal collapse improves on Brookhiser's in some respects. It dispenses with the boosterish faith that elections are always contests of conviction that issue a popular verdict on the issues. Mandate, shmandate. It helps debunk the most exaggerated forms of New Class demonology that inflate the power of blacks, women, and unions in the Democratic Party. Moreover, *Right Turn* underscores that however much the traumas of the 1960s haunt liberalism and the Democratic Party, the key factors working on both today are economic and international. Finally, although Ferguson and Rogers do not frame the issue in this way, they remind us that forces of privilege inside the party are working to exploit the healthy process of liberal self-scrutiny—not to save liberalism but to sabotage it.

BUT THESE ideas, and *Right Turn* more generally, are marred by a relentless reductionism that takes the political out of political economy. In the hands of Ferguson and Rogers, the truth that business is the most special of special interests becomes a monistic fixation on capitalist cabals. While detailing provocatively why various business firms line up politically the way they do, Ferguson and Rogers leap from patterns of campaign contribution to wild inferences about business control of the political process, and they conceive of that influence in the most personalized and venal way.

The truth is that beyond their own generally pro-capitalist sentiments, politicians in capitalist societies must rely on the cooperation of the business community to produce the employment and trade for which voters have come to hold them responsible. That is, politicians have political motives of their own for listening carefully to industrialists and financiers. Perhaps most critically in the last decade, susceptibility to business definitions has been enhanced by the breakdown of the Keynesian growth formula. Across the Western world, politicians of a variety of schools have discovered a new respect for the market—because they fear that the costs of social consumption have reached a point of diminishing reward, because social programs depend on the surplus that only growth can provide, because they face a perplexing environment with little certainty about how to master it. The quandary of the welfare state is intellectual as well as structural.

ULTIMATELY *Right Turn* is an exhortation based on a hope: Democrats, don't reach out to the center, reach down toward the bottom, to the hidden majority composed of poor and working-class voters and the non-voters who are waiting for a progressive alternative. This judgment is based on a partially correct, but incomplete, reading of popular opinion. True, populist impulses run deep in the plebeian portion of Reagan's electoral base. And favorable attitudes toward New Deal staples such as Social Security and unemployment insurance endure. This much is barely controversial. But these diffuse sentiments, as well as the role of the economy in Reagan's two victories, hardly mean all is well with liberalism. Gritty, down-home concerns of workers about personal and family well-being do not necessarily entail a larger social vision, and the national percentages obscure the alienation from liberalism felt by key elements of the Democrats' traditional base: Southern Baptists, northern Catholic workers, lower-middle-class Jews. That these disaffected groups are not lacking in racial generosity does not mean they endorse affirmative action. That the public wants Rambo-style adventurism more in the movies than in Latin American foreign policy does not mean it wants to embrace Sandinista thuggery. The particulars are all-important, for liberalism is not of a piece.

Ferguson and Roger's refusal to credit the distinction between New Deal and '60s liberalism gives their discussion of reform a disembodied, abstract quality, just as all the harping on class and on the nostrum of full employment tends to obscure salient features of the American poor: the racial complexion of the urban underclasses, the complex feelings whites of modest income have toward them, the precarious legitimacy of racially targeted remedies, the potential limits of full employment in solving the problems of the ghetto poor. Whether the progressive tendencies correctly discerned by Ferguson and Rogers can be mobilized will depend on the historically specific character of the remedies, the language, and the coalitions energized by liberals.

RIGHT TURN's vagueness about race is part of a more general neglect of the popular crisis of liberalism that erupted in the 1960s, before business launched its powerful offensive. That earlier crisis is germane, not because the issues of that time are still the most pressing ones (although any effort to remedy the ills of the black underclass may revive some of those concerns), but because it was then that the party blurred its identity as the vehicle of middle-income Americans and that the nature of the party's activists, internal cleavages, and concerns changed significantly. Many younger voters, for whom those frenzies are remote, have come to view the Democratic Party as the baleful home for America's wounded citizens and sectors, and the Republican Party as the steward of the growth that will benefit all Americans, not just the well-heeled. Others a bit older embrace these images because they fit with what they learned in their most recent experience of liberal reform.

And yet the character of liberalism will not be the most decisive influence on post-Reagan politics, or even on the future of liberalism itself. Intra-Republican bickering, the passing of Reagan from the political scene, and, most critically, economic disaster may return the Democrats to power without need for further soul-searching, most of which is either shallow or disingenuous. In highlighting the structural forces that will continue to push America to the right no matter which party is in power, Ferguson and Rogers provide a stark and bracing caution: if the resurgent power of business or the parroting of the Republicans drives the party to abjure its classic com-

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mitments, then a Democratic triumph at the polls may not be good for liberalism.

But staving off the influence of business PACs and Democratic money men will not suffice to revitalize liberalism, either. Liberalism must also face the danger within: complicity in its own vulnerability, responsibility for its own revival. And here resistance is likely to come—indeed, has been coming, although often halfheartedly—not from liberalism's professed enemies, but from those constituencies that have vested spiritual and material interests in maintaining things as they are, or at least have been. This is the truly political problem of liberalism that Brookhiser, despite his partisan jabs and freewheeling interpretive style, captures well. As the booing of Coretta Scott King by Jackson supporters at the 1984 Democratic Convention and as the Cuomo speech attest, the Democrats still must learn how to talk to one another and to the nation as a whole.

JONATHAN RIEDER

Jonathan Rieder, associate professor of sociology at Yale University, is a fellow at the Russell Sage Foundation this year. He is the author of *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism* (Harvard University Press).

REINVENTING READING

The Rustle of Language
by Roland Barthes
translated by Richard Howard

(Hill and Wang, 373 pp., $25)

The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation
by Roland Barthes
translated by Richard Howard

(Hill and Wang, 312 pp., $22.95)

In the six years since his death—years that have seen the publication in book form of many essays previously scattered in various periodicals—Roland Barthes has emerged more and more as the most characteristic French intellectual of his time, a man who set agendas of research and reflection that still preoccupy us. This observation may seem surprising if one thinks of French intellectuals—of André Malraux, of Jean-Paul Sartre—as typically concerned with large issues of man's fate. For Barthes's attention was always resolutely fixed on language: on the nature of the linguistic sign, on the workings of discourse (that is, of language in action), on texts—on the most complex, elaborated, and unpredictable uses of language. Barthes was an intellectual for a "cool" sensibility, for a world suspicious of the militant imperatives of *littérature engagée*. He represented a world that produced, rather, the *nouveau roman*, structuralism, pop art, hyperrealism, the arts of ironic and elegant quotation that we call "postmodernist."

If we think of Barthes as first and foremost a literary critic, who ventured into critical writing on painting, music, photography, and fashion as well, the essays collected in these two volumes should remind us of how consistently his reflection on literature, even at its most abstruse and technical, was set in the context of a more general exploration of the forms of culture. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, whose teaching presides over so much of Barthes's work, predicted that linguistics would one day be merely a branch of a general science of signs, one that would have as its field of application nothing less than the entire cultural production of signs, all the ways in which social man has furnished his world with meaning. From the earliest stages of his career, notably in *Mythologies* (1957), Barthes insisted on viewing signs as the product of culture, demanding a critical decoding and decipherment most of all where they appeared to be simply the product of nature. "Myth," in his definition, is that which a given society wants us to consider in the realm of the given, the unquestionable, whereas it is really the imposition of a set of messages. Barthes, in sum, wanted to teach us to read with suspicion.

Eventually, the quest for a demystified (or "demythified") reading would lead Barthes beyond Saussure's dream of a universal semiology, of a general theory of signs. If he had once set himself the task of providing elements of a "metalanguage"—a language about language, one that would master its operations—later in his career he acknowledged that finally there could be no place outside of language from which to talk about language. It followed that the student of language could pursue its study, and the report of that study, only as a highly self-conscious and playful user of language: that is, as a writer. Elected to the first Chair of Literary Semiology at the Collège de France, Barthes used his inaugural lecture to renounce the search for a metalanguage, to turn away from semiology itself as a formal discipline.

The later work of Barthes, from the end of the 1960s onward (many key texts are collected in these new books, especially in *The Rustle of Language*), is more and more preoccupied with questions of reading and of listening: the dilemmas and opportunities that arise when the analyst discovers that the object of his analytical work is homogeneous with the analysis itself, that both work *within* language, that both are products of language, that the reader is no more than a character in the text, that "the theory of the Text can coincide only with a practice of writing." Increasingly, such preoccupations led Barthes to freer and more "creative" forms in his own writing.

From the somewhat tense and abstruse (though always elegant and masterful) styles of his earlier essays, he moved to the autobiographical and novelistic *Roland Barthes* and *A Lover's Discourse*. And in a lecture given at the Collège de France in 1978, two years before his death, he confessed his desire to move from writing about literature to the writing of literature, envisioning a novel. For the form of the novel, he said,

> would permit me, fully but indirectly, the representation of an affective order. I read almost everywhere that it is characteristic of a "modern" sensibility to "conceal its tenderness" (beneath the stratagems of

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writing); but why? Is it "truer," is it more valuable because one struggles to conceal it? An entire ethic, today, scorns and condemns the expression of *pathos* (in the simple sense I intend), with regard to either political or pulsional (sexual) rationality; the Novel, as I read or desire it, is precisely that Form which, by delegating the discourse of affect to characters, permits saying that affect openly: here *the pathetic* can be said, for the Novel, since it is representation and not expression, can never be for the subject who writes it a discourse of bad faith. Finally and perhaps especially, the Novel . . . since its writing is mediate (it presents ideas and feelings only by intermediaries) . . . exerts no pressure upon the other (the reader); its power is the truth of affects, not of ideas: hence, it is never arrogant, terrorist: according to Nietzsche's typology, it aligns itself with Art, not with Priesthood.

Barthes's apologia for the novelist reads as a discovery of Keats's famous notion of "negative capability": the capacity to live in and through otherness, the advantages of being not "the virtuous philosopher" but "the chameleon poet." Of course there is the easy temptation here to turn Barthes against himself, to use this confessional moment to criticize much of his earlier work as "arrogant, terrorist"—as the work of the structuralist priesthood. But the more one reads and rereads Barthes, the more one is led to the conclusion that turning the late Barthes against the earlier Barthes represents a misunderstanding.

Whatever the assertiveness of the essays and books in which he was struggling to found literary structuralism and cultural semiology, Barthes was always notable for his ironic distance from formulas, his distrust of proclamations and manifestos, his constant *disponsibilité*, to use a word dear to André Gide (the subject of Barthes's first published essay): an openness to the new, a restless need to move on, to *passer outre*, as Gide would have said. Barthes's changes of position indeed laid him open to charges of modishness from those who had taken up an unshakable position within one ism or another. But such charges are easily dismissed. In retrospect it is clear that Barthes's career was an exemplary search for understanding how man creates meaning, a lifelong exploration of man's definition as *homo significans*, the maker of meaning in signs. In anthropology, in linguistics, philosophy, and the discourse upon literature, this has been a characteristic preoccupation of our age, and no one addressed himself to it so persistently, so multifariously, so ingeniously, as Barthes.

It is evident that Barthes is well on the way in France to becoming a "classic," whose complete oeuvre will doubtless be available in a uniform edition, who is already—some 20 years after the bitter polemic in which he was attacked by Sorbonne professor Raymond Picard in a pamphlet entitled *Nouvelle Critique ou nouvelle imposture*—cited in Sorbonne doctoral theses. In the United States, however, the assimilation of Barthes has been more uncertain. He has for some years now entered into the academic bloodstream: his books are sold in campus bookstores; they are part of the required reading of graduate students, probably no longer just those in French and comparative literature but those in English as well; and in some outposts he shows up in the lectures of law professors too. Still, Barthes remains the object of considerable resistance, even of hostility.

EXHIBIT A is the review of *The Rustle of Language* by Harold Brodkey that appeared in the *New York Times Book Review* last April. There we learn that Barthes is merely a manifestation of "Sixties-isme" whom one does not read "seriously"; an apostle of unreason, of narcissism, and of "political-theological hysteria" who proposes "a *totalitarianism of pleasure*." For Brodkey, Barthes is "infantile," the representative of "a revolution that changed everything and accomplished nothing." And Brodkey judges that "no critical book, none of his phrases, famous for a while or still, survive as authoritative or of real interest in current literary controversies."

Brodkey's intemperate review brought to mind some more pondered but still adverse American responses to Barthes—for instance John Updike's essay of 1975 about *S/Z* and *The Pleasure of the Text*, where we read that "*S/Z* is a nearly unreadable book about reading," and that "I have no recollection of any other book ostensibly in the English language which gave me such pains to peruse," and that "his criticism lacks only the quality of inspiring trust." Nor was this an isolated case of a practicing novelist objecting to the incursion of a new and alien criticism into his realm. John Bayley, again on *S/Z* (perhaps Barthes's most accomplished book), wrote in 1973 that "the results are certainly illuminating, but they will afford most profit to that numerous class of persons who have no instinctive enjoyment of literature and yet feel they ought to get something out of it." (These words appeared in the *New York Review of Books*, which has lately made handsome amends with Helen Vendler's thorough and sensitive essay on the two volumes here under review.)

One may well wonder why the reception of Barthes in some of the more

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prominent journals of our culture has come so belatedly and, if the case of Brodkey is at all representative, with so many misunderstandings and grudges still so apparent. The different rates of the assimilation of Barthes may simply be attributed to an ever widening rift between academic literary studies and journalistic literary criticism. But the rift, I think, really lies elsewhere: between a literary criticism that has a good conscience about the traditional goals and methods of its work, and another kind of reflection on literature that is full of doubts about its status and purpose, yet continues to feel that talking, lecturing, writing about literature and its language touches—as no other "discipline" quite does—on certain key issues in culture and on the very definition of the human.

TRADITIONAL literary criticism (including what was called in America the "New Criticism") is primarily exegetical, an analytic restating of the structure and texture of the literary work with the aim of leading the reader to a greater appreciation of its complexity, nuance, and unity, and an evaluation of its relative place in the "canon" composed of the masterworks of the tradition. The understanding of literature is considered to be the sum of a number of acts of explication. New criticism of the Barthesian variety, however, has tended to disdain exegesis, and to shatter the unity of the individual work in a search to understand the components of "literariness" itself, the workings of "textuality," the adventures of language in the making of sense.

This "newer" literary criticism is protean and varied. Of course it has been shaped by figures other than Barthes: by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man and Harold Bloom (not to mention the fountainhead figures, Nietzsche and Freud). Still, acknowledged or unacknowledged, Barthes remains the exemplary "newer" critic, marked by a certain restlessness, a desire to move beyond the mere exegesis of works to the question of how meaning itself comes to be made. Criticism in the wake of Barthes is less interested in what texts mean than in how they mean—the processes that constitute "semiosis" (the production of signification), including the radical uncertainties introduced into those processes by the play of signs, the ambiguities that result from the combination of signs, the problems raised by the inescapable presence of figures that name something in terms of something else. Once one has accepted that language is not a simple naming of the world but a system in which meaning arises from the combination and the interrelationship of elements, and also that this system preexists every individual speaker, who must find his place in a system that he does not possess but merely borrows—once one has accepted all this, writing and reading become more unsettled and unsettling than one once believed.

It is reading that has more and more become the obsessive object of attention in the most interesting literary criticism. Barthes mentions the spectator of Greek tragedy as a possible model for reading as he understands it. The spectator of *Oedipus the King*, for instance, is always hearing a double message: listening to the dramatic dialogue but also hearing what each of its partners does not hear, knowing as spectator what the characters cannot know. Barthes writes in the essay "On Reading":

> A "true" reading . . . would be a mad reading, not because it would invent improbable meanings (misconstructions), not because it would be "delirious," but because it would perceive the simultaneous multiplicity of meanings, of points of view, of structures, a space extended outside the laws which proscribe contradiction.

Such a view leads to what Barthes calls the "paradox" of reading:

> It is commonly admitted that to read is to decode: letters, words, meanings, structures, and this is incontestable; but by accumulating decodings (since reading is by rights infinite), by removing the safety catch of meaning, by putting reading into freewheeling (which is its structural vocation), the reader is caught up in a dialectical reversal: finally, he does not decode, he *overcodes*; he does not decipher, he produces, he accumulates languages, he lets himself be infinitely and tirelessly traversed by them: he is that traversal.

Barthes moves on to the philosophical implications of reading thus conceived. The reader ceases to be "the *thinking subject*" of idealist philosophy and becomes something closer to the psychoanalytic conception of the subject, "devoid of all unity, lost in the double misreading of his unconscious and of his ideology, and remembering only a whirligig of languages."

One may find this overstated; the provocation of overstatement is one of the arms in Barthes's vast rhetorical ar-

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senal, and one needs the full context of his essays to see how overstatement is ironized and attenuated. But at the same time one may acknowledge that he pushes us toward a new position of discomfort in reading, an awareness that our natural desire to reduce texts (and other utterances) to one interpretation partakes of repression, that it is a claim of mastery that is radically unfounded. And as Barthes makes clear in other essays, perhaps most forcefully in some very interesting pieces on what it means to teach, such a decentered and "deauthorized" view of reading has implications for our whole cultural dialogue. Far from wishing to impose himself as "terrorist" in this dialogue, Barthes presents a view of cultural interpretation and exchange that is highly mobile, characterized by relations of desire and transference, offering all participants—and requiring of them—empowerment through expression, access to the word.

The Rustle of Language includes what appears to be the very last text Barthes wrote, called "One Always Fails in Speaking of What One Loves." It was left in his typewriter the day he was struck down by a passing vehicle on a Paris street. It is a meditation on Stendhal, a writer whom Barthes rarely discussed but with whom he clearly felt a close affinity. In this brief and luminous essay, Barthes notes Stendhal's self-conscious failure, in his journals and travel writings, to express the beauty he finds in Italy, specifically his failure to *name* the sources of his pleasure in everything Italian. And Barthes goes on to show how this failure would be redeemed later on, in the glorious opening pages of *The Charterhouse of Parma*, where Stendhal finds access to communication of his joy in the recreation of the Italian landscape and soul, and sweeps up his reader with him. Such is the miracle of writing when it ceases to be merely the vehicle of a (failed) self-expression and becomes a medium of communication, when it invites the reader's participation in the creation of sense and sentiment. It is part of Barthes's message that one will always fail to speak directly of what one loves, that one needs to work within the impersonal order of symbols that is language to recreate that experience of love—not in order to master it for oneself but to create the possibility, for others, of reading it.

PETER BROOKS

Peter Brooks is professor of French and comparative literature at Yale University and the author most recently of *Reading for the Plot* (Vintage).

GISELLE'S REVENGE

Dancing on My Grave by Gelsey Kirkland with Greg Lawrence

(Doubleday, 286 pp., $17.95)

Readers hoping for a fun, trashy exposé of the ballet world will be disappointed by Gelsey Kirkland's ominously titled autobiography. Not that it doesn't contain enough unsavory details of sex and infidelity, anorexia and bulimia, drugs and plastic surgery, and other assorted physical ills and emotional abuses. The problem lies in the heroine herself, who emerges as a distinctly antipathetic character—self-centered, narcissistic, pompous—making the reader feel heartless for not fully sympathizing with her in her plight, which is genuinely awful.

Kirkland's is a story of immense promise unfulfilled, of talent gone awry. While still a teenager at the New York City Ballet, she won people's hearts with the limpidity and angelic purity of her dancing. When she left in 1974 to dance with the recently defected Mikhail Baryshnikov, audiences were fascinated by the prospect of an American ballerina taking on the classic roles that seemed to belong by birthright to her more glamorous Russian and European sisters. Early performances provided a tantalizing glimpse of greatness to come. But something went wrong. Her dancing became erratic; her interpretations were often stubbornly wrongheaded; injury and illness led her to cancel more engagements than she fulfilled. Rumors abounded: of irrational behavior, anorexia, drug addiction. She dropped out of sight, then emerged suddenly with this book, promising to Tell All.

Kirkland claims to have written the book so that her misadventures might serve as a warning to other aspiring young dancers. But how many of them are really likely to have their lips injected with silicone or their earlobes lopped off, as she did? And though there is undoubtedly drug use among dancers, as there is among baseball players and investment bankers, few dancers can afford to support a serious cocaine habit. (The real scandal of ballet in this country is how underpaid the rank and file are, something Kirkland never had to suffer.)

Her true motive for airing in public the dirty tights and dance belts of herself and her numerous lovers appears to be somewhat baser. Kirkland is a woman scorned, and her fury at Baryshnikov is embarrassingly obvious, despite the ingenuousness and veneer of objectivity she cultivates. She is both awkward and cunning in her use of language: awkward in her pretentiousness ("The mechanical reproduction of style from generation to generation seemed to preclude a conscious mastery of the compositional principles that related form to content") and cunning in her indirection (she writes of her first sexual encounter with Baryshnikov: "I felt no need to fake what had not taken place, what could not have taken place in the time that had elapsed"). She can hardly pretend to be practicing discretion after all the intimacies she has betrayed. In the end, her inflated style has the effect of distancing her from the action, of making her appear blameless and aloof from the havoc that seems inevitably to follow in her wake.

The title Kirkland has chosen for her memoirs is an allusion to *Giselle*, the quintessential tragic ballet of the Romantic era, whose eponymous heroine is the role with which Kirkland seems most to identify. But whereas Giselle, having died of a broken heart, forgives Albrecht his duplicity, Gelsey cannot find it in her heart to do the same. To the contrary: toward the end of her story, following her final resignation-cum-firing from American Ballet Theatre, she gleefully reports Baryshnikov threatening: "If I ever read my name in print . . . I vill destroy her!" *Dancing on My Grave*, then, is Giselle's revenge—against Baryshnikov and against all the other men in her life whom she believes to have misunderstood, mistreated, or neglected her, ultimately leading, in her mind, to her self-destruction.

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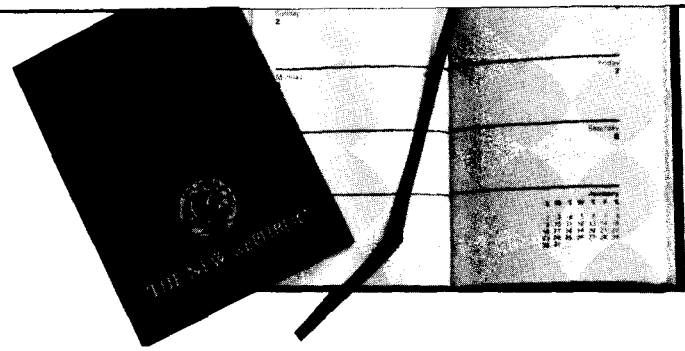
Art and love—or, at least, ballet and men—are inextricably bound in Kirkland's story. The connection began early and inauspiciously. Enrolled against her will at the School of American Ballet, she discovered that dancing provided a physical outlet for venting her rage against her alcoholic father. She was a rebellious and uncooperative student, adopting "an instinctual strategy of passive resistance." Her talent, however, was indisputable, and in 1968, when Kirkland was just 15, she was invited by George Balanchine to join the New York City Ballet.

It is not surprising that Kirkland's adolescent anger should have been redirected against this new authority figure. Even so, the section on Balanchine is a shocker. She calls up the hoariest clichés, twaddle that not even the British believe anymore. Balanchine's dancers were "robots"; he sought to repress "emotion and dramatic intensity"; he eschewed the star system because he feared that dancers with strong personalities "might detract or steal thunder from his choreography." He "altered and sometimes twisted classical line and proportion to such an extent that it was possible for him to create a ballet that not only exploited, but concealed the limitations of his dancers." (How it is possible simultaneously to exploit and to conceal is never revealed.) His training turned hands and feet into "claws and talons"; "twisted extremities" dictated by his choreography gave "the illusion of depth to dancers who had been taught not to think."

Even allowing for variances in personal taste, Kirkland's evaluation of Balanchine style may well strike readers who have seen his dancers perform his ballets as bizarre, if not delusional. Empirical evidence of the defectiveness of her theories is available, after all, to anyone for the price of a ticket. Furthermore, lay readers should not be hoodwinked into believing that they fail to understand Kirkland's critical analysis because they lack the background or the technical vocabulary. Despite her contention that she has acquired a "new command of language," her attempts to verbalize her views on dance result in gibberish. ("I was no longer pulling myself through visual space; I was pushing through a medium in order to reveal my inner world.")

When the opportunity to escape Balanchine presented itself in the autumn of 1974, Kirkland seized it with avidity. Soviet superstar Mikhail Baryshnikov had just defected in Canada and was about to join American Ballet Theatre, a rival



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of sorts to the New York City Ballet, with a more traditional repertory. Long on talent but short of stature, Baryshnikov sought out the diminutive Kirkland as his partner. The partnership turned into a romance; the romance soured. He failed to appreciate Kirkland's theories on technique and interpretation ("He looked at my unorthodox methods with the sort of wide-eyed skepticism that a superstitious peasant might display when confronted with a scientific marvel"). There were turbulent rehearsal sessions culminating in one or both of them storming out of the studio.

Four years later, Baryshnikov stunned the ballet world by defecting again, this time to Balanchine and City Ballet. For Kirkland this was the ultimate betrayal. Her health declined; she became injury prone; she displayed fits of temperament. At the beginning of 1980 she resigned from ABT, complaining to artistic director Lucia Chase that she felt "unloved." Later that year Baryshnikov returned to ABT as artistic director, and Kirkland accepted his offer to rejoin the company. But by this time her decline was irreversible. Her latest boyfriend, also a dancer, introduced her to cocaine, and at the end of the year they were both dismissed for unprofessional behavior. Attempts at touring on their own while under the influence proved disastrous. In the spring of 1981 she rejoined ABT, but her contract was not renewed when it expired at the end of the summer. In November 1982, Baryshnikov rehired her yet again.

Early in 1984 Kirkland met her future husband and co-author outside the Harlem home of their drug dealer. Lawrence is described as "a poet of sorts" and is the author of an unpublished novel, *Venus on the Skids*—apparently a parable, whose protagonist is "a child prodigy who has a big problem: he was born without a tongue." "Unlike many men that I had known," Kirkland writes, "he did not make me feel ignorant." They formed a "secret strategy for withdrawal," which is never fully explained but involved immersing themselves in the works of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven; Dante, Shakespeare, and Schiller; Botticelli, Leonardo, and Rembrandt: a veritable adult-education crash course in the classics of Western civilization. Writing this book, Kirkland states, was "the final therapeutic stage of my recovery."

When her story ends in March 1986, she is preparing to dance *Romeo and Juliet* with the Royal Ballet. By all accounts, this comeback was a smashing success. But the latest news from London does not bode well: a scheduled debut in the Royal's production of *Giselle* had to be canceled owing to a stress fracture, after the ballerina had convinced management to incorporate "certain adjustments to the staging that she found essential to her reading of the title character," according to a report in *Dance Magazine*.

It is difficult to see how Kirkland can consider herself to be "recovered" when she believes her problems to have stemmed in the first place not from any shortcomings of her own but from the inability of a world that embraced mediocrity to appreciate her zeal for perfection. "The fundamental cause of my disease, the ultimate source of all my maladies," she writes, was "the clash between my inner needs and the outer world," which was "inimical to that kind of grandeur to which I had dedicated myself." She faults herself only for "a chronic failure to take full responsibility for my vision."

Anyone who disagreed with her was either lazy or trying purposely to thwart her. No one was as dedicated, no one understood as profoundly, no one strove as relentlessly as she; and any glimmers of art that emerged on the stage were the result solely of her own unwavering commitment to excellence. Here is her telling account of working with Baryshnikov—not exactly a slouch when it comes to the classical ballet:

> If I had to pester, cajole, threaten, and shame him into making an effort, that was my obligation. My first concern was the artistry that passed between us. . . . Behind the mask of indifference, he had to appreciate my unswerving commitment to the art. He knew that I made the same kind of demands on all my partners over the years. My meticulous attention to detail pushed them to deliver and sparked at least a few moments of real splendor.

"Meticulous attention to detail" translates for Kirkland into a stultifying analysis of every movement and gesture in the choreography in search of some hidden agenda. She turns out to be the Dustin Hoffman of the ballet. Preparing to dance in Jerome Robbins's *The Cage*, in which the dancers portray creatures in an insectlike society, Kirkland and her teacher-guru of the moment hunted cockroaches in the studio, "looking for an angle on the movement quality of my character." In *Raymonda*, the ballerina has a variation with a scarf—a common conceit in 19th-century classical ballet. Kirkland ponders: "No explanation was offered as to the significance of the actions surrounding the scarf. Was I supposed to be fascinated that this prop floated like an airy nothing? Was I supposed to be amused?" The numbing literalness of Kirkland's mind has a far more serious consequence than the lack of a sense of humor: the lack of a sense of poetry. She cannot accept the existence of the ineffable. For her, all art, even the silent art of the dance, must be reducible to verbal explanations of dramatic motivation and technique.

What is particularly unfortunate about Kirkland's book is that her overwhelming personal problems and blinding fanaticism obscure some real issues in ballet that deserve to be addressed seriously. Teenage students and young company members are too often left to fend for themselves at a time when they desperately need a support system to which they can turn for authoritative advice on physical and psychological problems. Coaching is routinely neglected in the rush to mount novelties that will attract attention at the box office. But saddest by far is the damage Kirkland has done to herself. After reading this pathetic account, those who have actually seen her dance may forget how wonderful she could be on the stage. We feel like crying out with Baryshnikov: "Please, Gelsey, less talk-king. Just do."

EVA RESNIKOVA

Eva Resnikova is a free-lance writer living in New York City.

THE BONES OF POTTER'S FIELD

We have fired so long in this great wide
kiln the clay is bleached with our calcium
our skulls reshaped into cups and handles
our knees cracked bowls our hips halved jugs.
When they bear down with their shovels to dig
another in, the rich sand turning over
the way leaves turn over in the wind, whole
dark slices rain with knuckles. In the field
to bury strangers in out of our newly
gleaming bones we assemble the One who
will rise again.

JEAN MONAHAN

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Is Everything Sacred?

ISSUE ONE: And Your Little Dog Too. Two weeks ago a U.S. District Court in Greenville, Tennessee, ruled that the First Amendment rights of a Christian fundamentalist couple had been violated when their children were not excused from elementary school classes in which the Holt reading series was being used. "The plaintiffs believe that, after reading the entire Holt series [which includes *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Diary of Anne Frank*, both cited in the complaint], a child might adopt the views of a feminist, a humanist, a pacifist, an anti-Christian, a vegetarian, or an advocate of a 'one-world government,'" explained Judge Thomas G. Hull, and he ordered the children excused from classes in which the objectionable texts were used. Does this case, *Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools*, represent a setback for those secular humanist educators who have been trying to indoctrinate schoolchildren with the belief that human beings can be the agents of their own destinies?

THE ANSWER IS: No, that effort is happily still on track. There are two mistakes to be made in interpreting the Tennessee decision, and Secretary of Education William J. Bennett has made them both. Commenting in New York last week on the *Mozert* case, Bennett suggested that the issues involved have something to do with his own crusade to get public schools to offer instruction about commonly held "moral values." "I have great sympathy," he explained, referring to parents like the Mozerts, "for many of the people who claim that our textbooks are not doing what they should be doing . . . introducing people to a culture, common culture." But the Mozerts' complaint didn't have anything to do with a common culture. They objected, among other things, to a science textbook that explained tidal waves by physical causes. The whole point of the Tennessee case is that it involves the protection of the rights of people who manifestly do *not* share the beliefs of the common culture. Bennett's second mistake was to argue that issues such as those in *Mozert* ought to be negotiated in front of school boards: "I do not think that judicial intervention here is the right course," he said. But the courts are exactly the right place for these disputes. The court did not instruct the school to change its reading list (as the parents had originally petitioned); it exempted, as other courts have in similar cases, a small group of children from participation in activities that conflicted with the practice of their religion. Which body is better equipped to assess the legitimacy of such a First Amendment claim: a federal court or a local school board? Bennett is trying to make the grievances of a fringe group seem like a symptom of mainstream discontent; but the claim is factitious. Is he really willing to condemn *The Wizard of Oz*, as the Mozerts did, for promoting the view that a heart, some brains, and "da noive" are virtues that individuals can develop by their own hard work? Bennett is playing the neocon game of letting the extreme right act as point men in the assault on liberal ideology. The game is a dangerous one: the secretary is only out to tip the balance a little in his direction, and knows when to quit, but the fundamentalists are playing for different stakes entirely. In any event, whatever is common in our culture is, for better or worse, secular and humanist. This is not just because it is a premise of everyday life that things like tidal waves have scientific explanations. It's because the very idea of freedom of thought, including the idea of freedom of religion, is a secular humanist one. The real lesson of the *Mozert* decision is that tolerance of all views sometimes means a special dispensation for people who can tolerate no views but their own.

ISSUE TWO: Can We Talk About Drugs? By the luck of idle channel flipping, I happened to catch Nancy Reagan on Joan Rivers's new talk show last Thursday night. The first lady was in town to set straight people in the television industry who still think it's OK to refer to drugs on TV without pointing out that drug use is bad for you. (The notion that it is Hollywood that is going to show the way to the rest of the country on this matter is one of the more delightful conceits in the current public relations war on drugs.) Her appeal was evidently scheduled to coincide with a speech by the attorney general urging employers to use informants to report on drug use by fellow employees in "problem areas, such as locker rooms, parking lots, and . . . nearby taverns." On the show, Mrs. Reagan admitted to a deeply moved Joan Rivers that her own children had, yes, tried marijuana. And she explained that the best way to prevent drug use is to get people to realize that saying no to drugs is a moral choice. This reminded me of Justice Byron White's argument last spring in the decision upholding Georgia's sodomy law: that such laws are constitutional on grounds that the state has traditionally legislated on moral matters. I'm willing to accept the premise; what I don't understand is in what conceivable sense engaging in a particular sex act, or deciding to use a drug, counts as a moral issue. Because it might give you pleasure? What is inherently moral or immoral about, say, oral sex (which is included in the definition of sodomy in most states)? It's not that I can't generally spot a moral issue when I see one. Asking your employees to spy on their co-workers, for example: that's immoral.

LIKE MOST overeducated and athletically inept people, I'm a Boston Red Sox fan. There is no point in recounting here the details of the Sox' awesome fold in Game Six of the now mercifully completed World Series—the game in which, one out to go for the championship and with a comfortable lead, they contrived to lose it all. Many observers, impressed by the staggering odds against failure the Red Sox managed to overcome, have attributed the collapse to fate—the Curse of Ruth, that sort of thing. But it seems to me that precisely the improbability of the thing suggests deliberation. My theory is that, seeing clearly for the first time in almost 70 years what it would be like to be winners, the Red Sox realized how much finer a thing it is to lose. For there suddenly flashed before their eyes a vision of the contemporary culture of winning: they saw that winning would mean an interminable orgy of self-congratulation, of high-fiving, we're-number-one chanting, Jesus thanking, cereal promoting, and video making—that being winners would mean, in fact, being just like the Mets. It was nearly too late, but they drew back from the abyss, and thereby achieved an immortality untainted by success.

L. M.

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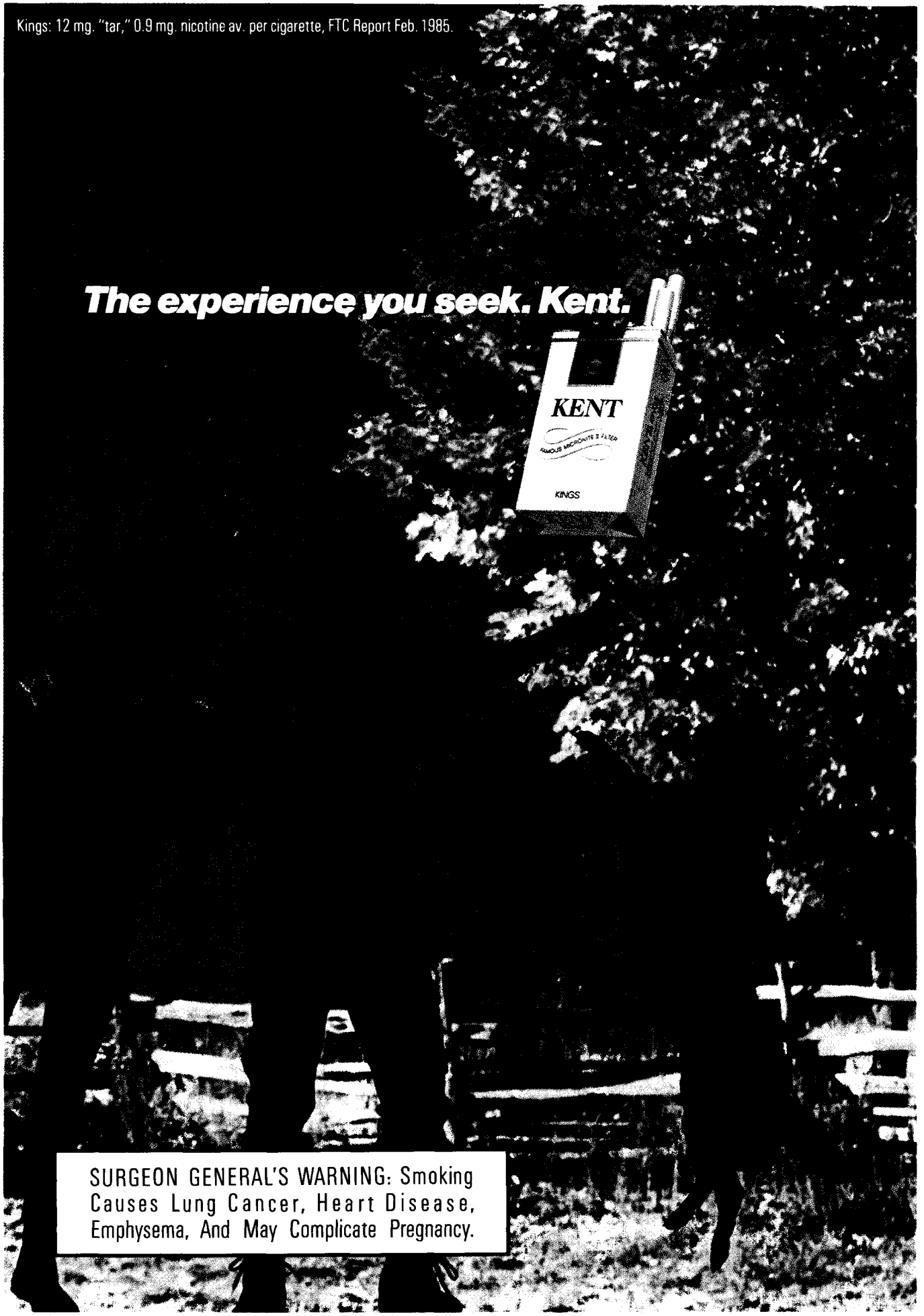
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